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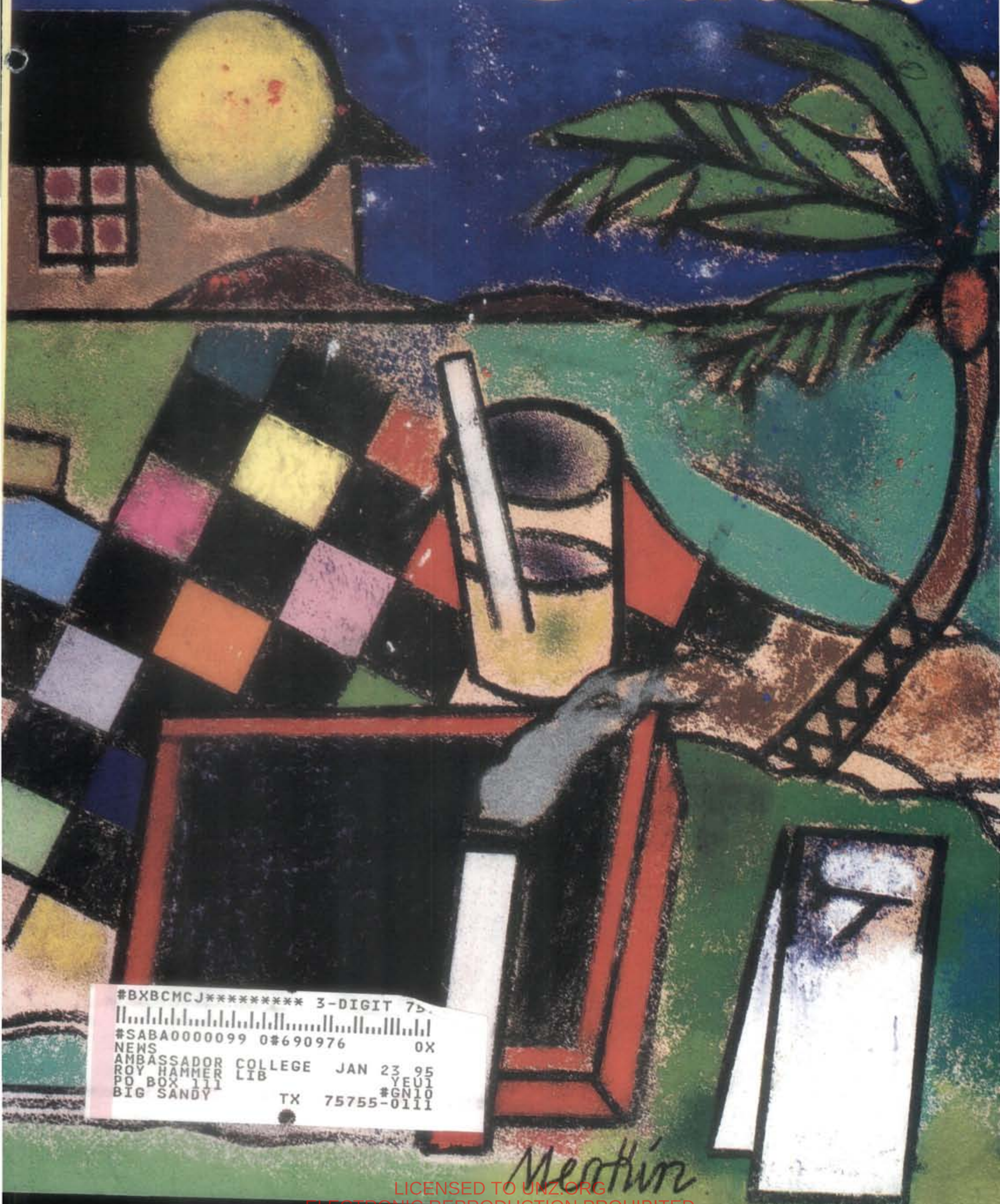

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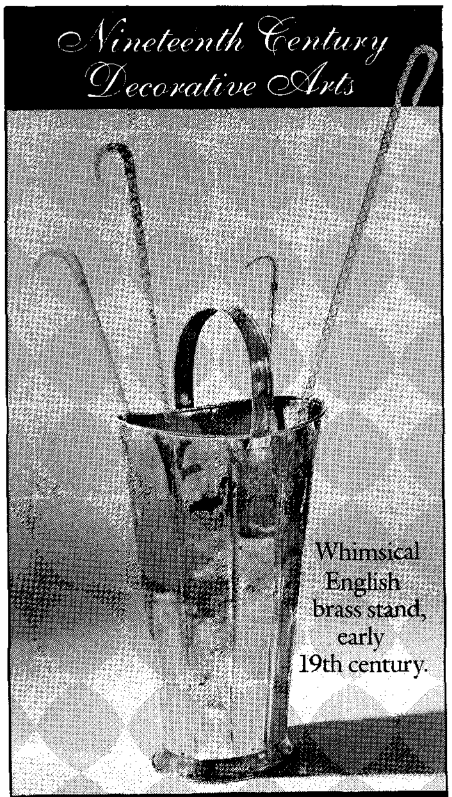

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THE NEW YORKER

MARCH 14, 1994

COMMENT Coming to Terms 4
For peace to come, the I.R.A. must understand who is on the other side.

IN THE MAIL 10

GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN 12

THE TALK OF THE TOWN 31
Kahane Chai's message, greetings from Kim Il Sung, etc.

DEPARTMENTS

Life and Letters Visible Man . . . . *David Remnick* 34
While Ralph Ellison, now eighty, is still working on his second novel, his early writings remain at the forefront of debate.

Letter from Berlin Secrets of the Files . . . . *Gerald Posner* 39
Scholars and investigators are protesting Washington's decision to return control of a crucial Nazi archive to Germany.

ANNALS OF THE MEDIA The Anti-Network . . . . *James Lardner* 48
Brian Lamb and C-SPAN found a new way of presenting the news: without stars and very, very slowly. Now they're becoming a model for a diversifying industry.

PORTFOLIO Onward . . . . *Saul Steinberg* 56

FICTION "Way Down Deep in the Jungle" . . . . *Thom Jones* 60

LANDMARKS To the Pennsylvania Station . . . . . *Sidney Blumenthal, Brendan Gill* 70
It was once a temple of progress, and it will be again, if Senator Moynihan gets his way.

THE CRITICS

A Critic at Large Behind the Culture of Violence . . . . *Louis Menand* 74
The Theatre Arnold Wesker's "The Kitchen" . . . . *John Lahr* 86
Sybille Pearson's "Unfinished Stories" . . . . *Nancy Franklin* 89
The Current Cinema "Germinal" . . . . *Anthony Lane* 90
Books Paul Theroux's "Millroy the Magician" . . . . *John Updike* 92
Briefly Noted 95

POEMS

"Porta San Pancrazio" . . . . *Joseph Brodsky* 52
"The Equinoctial Disturbances" . . . . *Amy Clampitt* 66

SHOUTS AND MURMURS All Shook Up . . . . *Bobbie Ann Mason* 96

COVER *Wishing You Were Here, by Richard Merkin*

DRAWINGS *J.B. Handelsman, Robert Grossman, Ed Arno, Ed Fisher, Donald Reilly, Mick Stevens, Warren Miller, Peter Steiner, John O'Brien, Robert Mankoff, W.B. Park, Jack Ziegler, Charles Barsotti*

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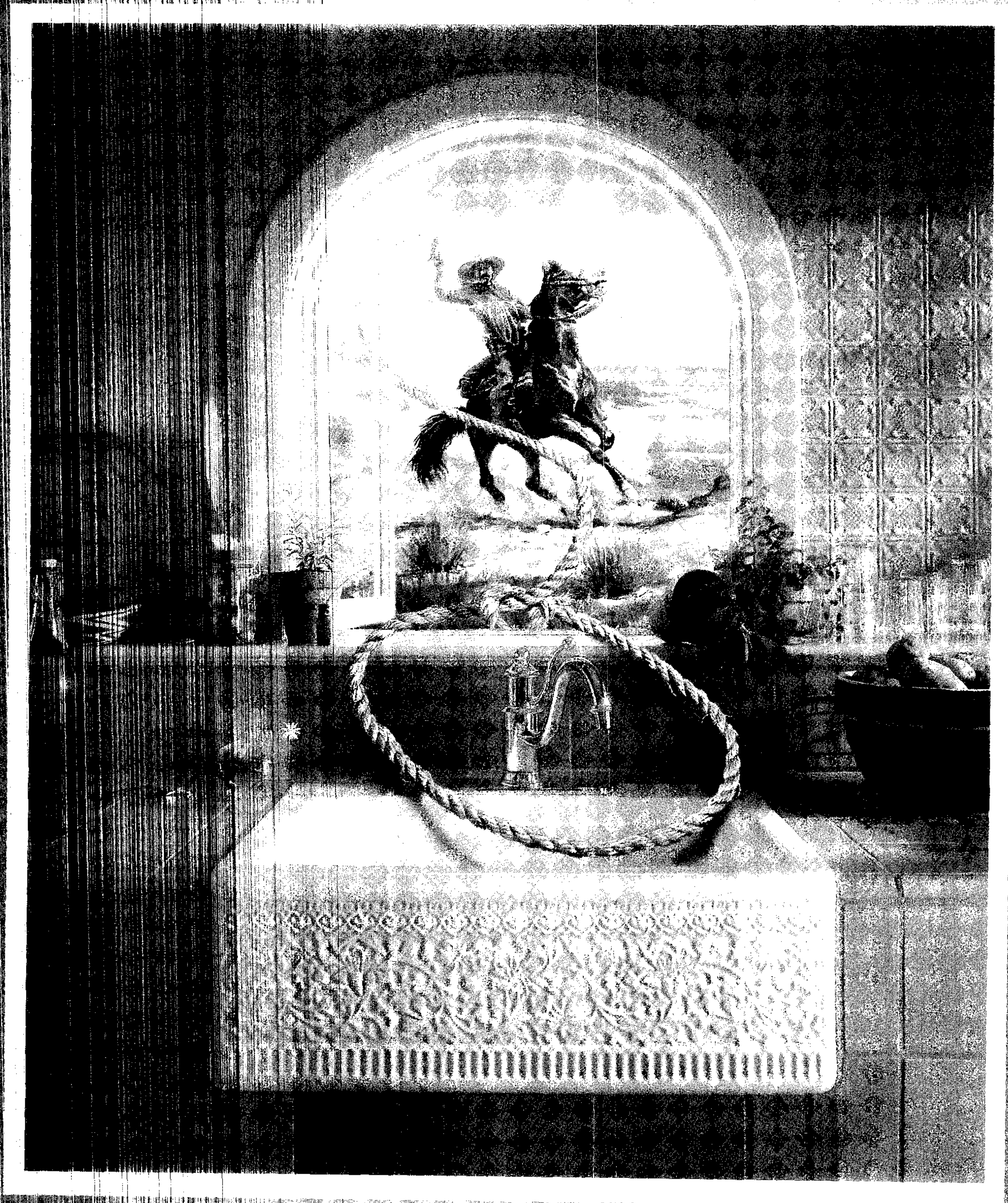

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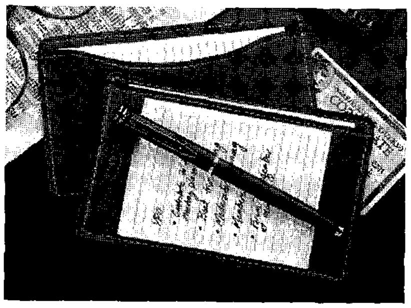

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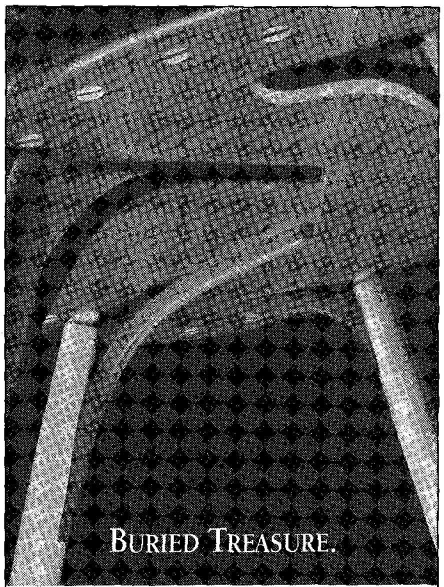

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COMMENT

COMING TO TERMS

ONE day soon, the Irish Republican Army is going to have to decide whether or not to stop fighting. Over the February 26th weekend, in Dublin, the Irish political party known as Sinn Fein, whose members serve as the I.R.A.'s allies and advisers, held a convention, at which their leader, Gerry Adams, repeated the point he had stressed in New York three and a half weeks earlier: that it was up to the British to clarify their intentions. But I.R.A. activists are also considering their own.

The I.R.A.'s root difficulty is that it has never really come to grips with the problem of the Northern unionists—the people who want to preserve the union between Northern Ireland and Britain which makes up the United Kingdom. The I.R.A. has always behaved as if its only real problem were the British Army. Get the Brits out, the I.R.A. has maintained, and the unionists will fold up.

A long history suggests that this analysis is wishful. The unionists, whose British ancestors moved to Ulster as colonists nearly four centuries ago, still define themselves by what they are not—and they are not Irish, they contend. They are also not Roman Catholics, and they see the Irish Republic, to the south of them, as a Roman Catholic state, which it residually is. They are every bit as determined as the I.R.A.; and it is odd that the I.R.A. should not recognize this, since the unionists are much the same kind of people (even though not of the same religious persuasion) as the Northern nationalists among whom the I.R.A. recruits. And the unionists have the numbers: although their community constitutes only a fifth of the entire island's population, in the North it outnumbers the nationalists' three to two.

The British government has long believed that if it withdrew its troops from Northern Ireland before an accepted local administration and police force were in place a number of unionists would attempt a massacre of nationalists, with civil war as the result. The fact that more people were killed last year by unionist paramilitaries than by I.R.A. members has done nothing to weaken that belief; and the worry behind it has not been assuaged by reminders from the Balkans

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and the Middle East of the savagery into which ethnic and religious differences can draw even civilized peoples. But, whether the British are right or wrong on that point, the unionists are an unchanging fact of Northern Irish life, and there will be no settlement until the I.R.A. brings itself to acknowledge as much. Cahal Cardinal Daly, Archbishop of Armagh, who is the senior Catholic prelate on the island and a longtime observer of its problems, said in a Lenten statement published in the *Irish Times* on February 18th, "The chief political defect of traditional republicanism in the past has been that it did not understand unionists and never came to terms with unionism as a political reality in this island. Republicans have talked of unionists only as an obstacle to 'national self-determination,' not as a part of the definition of self-determination."

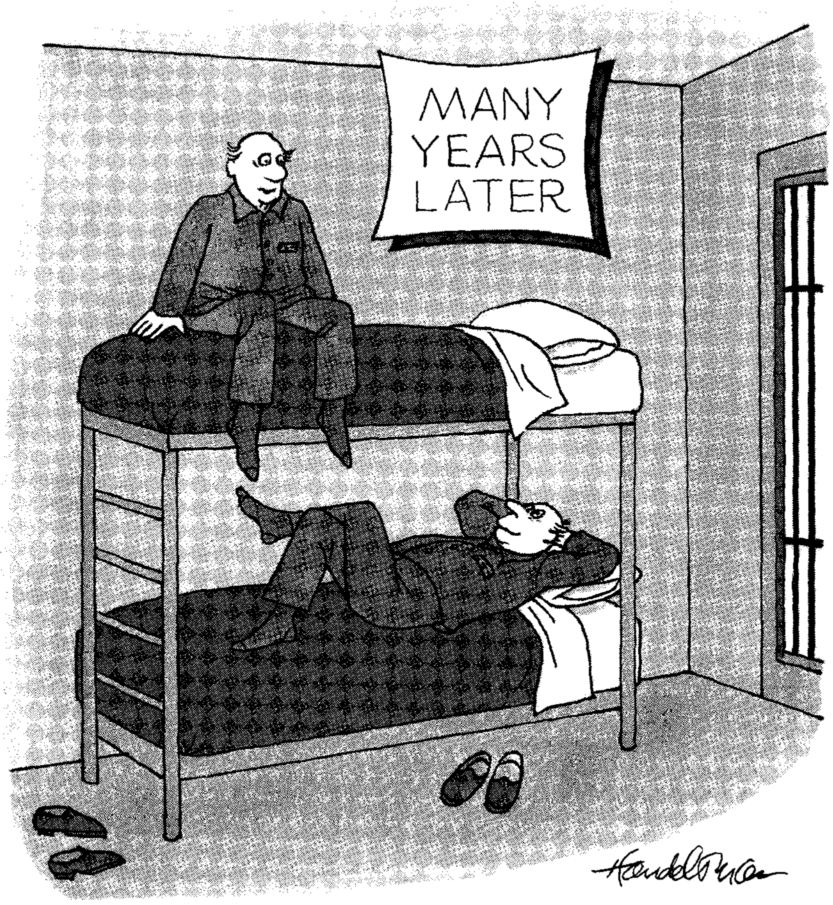
Self-determination has long been a favorite buzzword of I.R.A. apologists in their repeated demands that the whole island, North and South, vote as one on its future (and thus swamp the unionists). Now others are also finding the term useful. After both Britain and the Irish Republic equipped themselves for the nineteen-nineties with new Prime Ministers (John Major and Albert Reynolds, respectively), and after the two leaders heard, through different channels, that the I.R.A. was beginning to tire of war, they negotiated a shared declaration, which was issued last December 15th. The so-called Downing Street Declaration incorporated the doctrine of self-determination but stood it on its head. The people of the island of Ireland did indeed have the right of self-determination, said a paragraph much argued over between Dublin and London, but it must be "on the basis of consent, freely and concurrently given, North and South." In other words, there must be two votes, not one: any proposed deal for the island would still have to receive separate approval in the North. The unionists thus kept their veto, and this time the Irish Prime Minister was underwriting it.

Gerry Adams has asked a number of times to have the Downing Street text "clarified," and it is the unionist veto that he particularly keeps returning to. Parts of his long convention speech have been interpreted, not unreasonably, to mean that he and his friends have learned nothing: they still want a single vote on the future of the whole island, abolishing the unionists' power of veto. That is certainly one option before the I.R.A.: it can simply fight on in the hope that some later British government will grow tired enough to risk the opprobrium of letting the unionists fend for themselves.

But other parts of Adams' speech can be understood as saying that what the I.R.A. would chiefly reject is the reimposition of an unjust unionist state. And here the myth that nourishes the I.R.A.—new dawn to follow from ejection of foreign oppressor and reëstablishment of ethnically homogeneous island nation—shades into fact. When the unionists held power, between the founding of the Northern Ireland Parliament, in 1921, and the resumption of direct British rule, in 1972, they cheated the nationalists of their rights, especially to jobs at all levels; and the British let the inequity persist.

That this must not happen again is common ground. A fair sharing of power in the North must be guaranteed. But that is not something the British can deliver ahead of an I.R.A. ceasefire. It depends on political negotiations in which the I.R.A. could have a part if it first stopped fighting. That is the I.R.A.'s other option, still under review.

It cannot hurt the process of fact-facing, in all quarters, that these late stages in the long misunderstanding between Ireland and Britain are now being laid open to the cameras on an unprecedented scale. Jim Sheridan's film "In the Name of the Father" and, in real life, the extensive television coverage of the Paul Hill case in Belfast have been reminders that the contestants on both sides are human beings, with all the varied motives of their kind. And even more important have been the lifting, in Dublin, in mid-January, of a long-standing ban on broadcast interviews with I.R.A. apologists and the television scrutiny of Adams during his sojourn here. All this exasperates the British, who are continuing a halfhearted and preposterous broadcast ban of their own; but in the end journalistic pressure is as likely as any other instrument to induce rigor of thought. ♦



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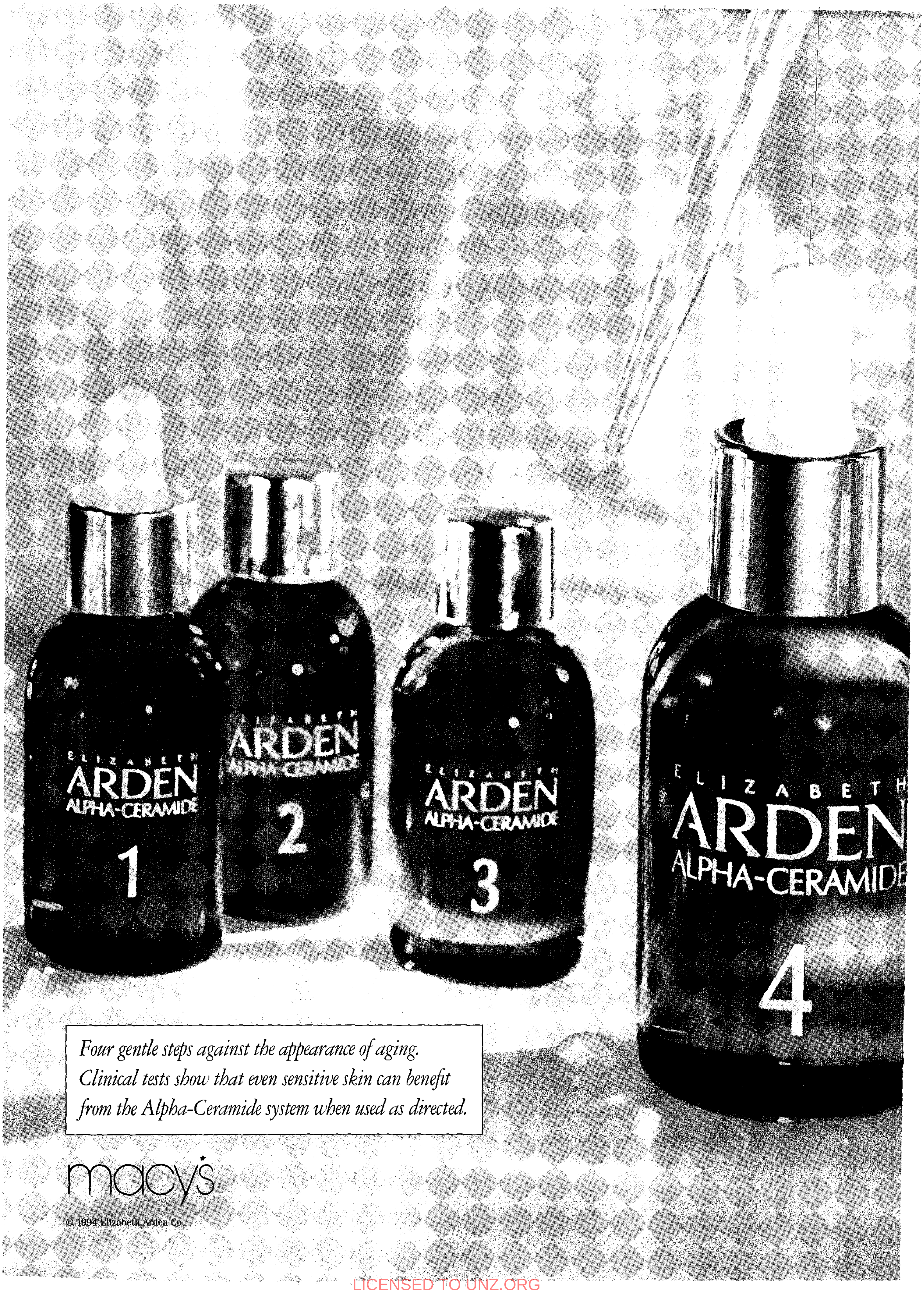
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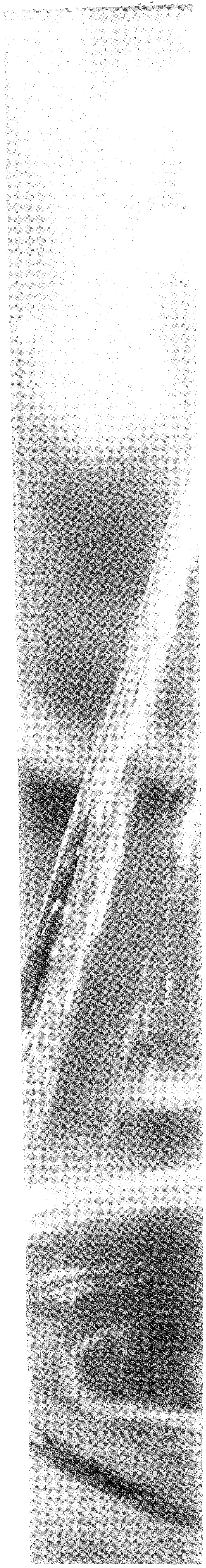

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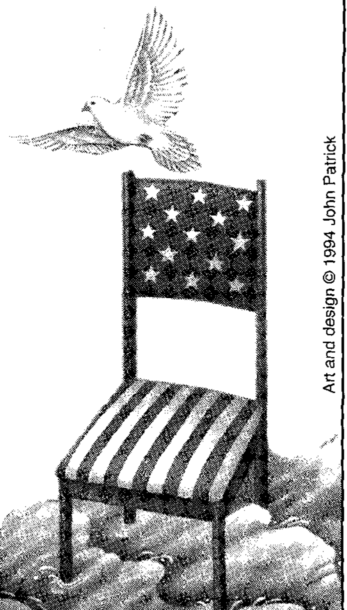

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RANDOM HOUSE

IN THE MAIL

BRIGHTER PROSPECTS

The February 14th Comment, "Park Prospects," paints a bleak picture of the city's parks. As a former Parks Commissioner, I can report that there are many more success stories than you pointed out, and that they were accomplished by a staff that was cut by a third during my tenure. We learned how to accomplish more with less by using practices from the private sector, such as managed competition between city employees and private contractors (the city employees proved to be better), creating mobile cleaning crews that could clean several parks each day, and hiring many employees on a seasonal basis. We were also more successful in raising money from private sources than you implied. Not only did we raise money for specific projects (to renovate our nurseries, for instance, so that we could provide plants for ourselves and other city agencies) but, over the last four years, more than seventy million dollars came to city parks through public-private partnerships, foundations, and grants. And the city itself spent some five hundred million dollars renovating hundreds of parks, playgrounds, and recreation centers, most notably Tompkins Square and Bryant Parks. Although it is true that toward the end of my tenure—and despite all the efforts of Parks Department workers—there was some visible deterioration in the parks because of reduced maintenance staffing, I am sure that, given Commissioner Stern's vast experience with parks and Mayor Giuliani's mandate, they will discover new ways of doing more with less, and will continue the innovations of the past four years.

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SOLZHENITSYN

David Remnick states ("The Exile Returns," February 14th) that the charge of authoritarianism against Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn is "preposterous." However, in his "Letter to the Soviet Leaders," which urged them to give up their Marxism, Solzhenitsyn told them that they could still maintain their authoritarian rule, and that it would be good for Russia if it rested on the proper spiritual basis. In the same work he wrote disparagingly of Western democracy, as he did later in condemning the American press's criticism of the war in Vietnam.

In "The Mortal Danger" Solzhenitsyn discovered a progressive czarism, in which there were uncensored newspapers and free universities. In reality, no newspaper could mention Rasputin's name even though it was on everyone's lips and the few universities in a country that was seventy-six per cent illiterate were distinguished by their obscurantism. In making light of the repressiveness of czarism Solzhenitsyn revealed his own authoritarian bent.

PAUL N. SIEGEL
Professor Emeritus
Long Island University
Brooklyn, N.Y.

SALVADOR TILLEY

Your cover satire of Eustace Tilley (February 21st) reminded me that the equally flamboyant Salvador Dali was a fan of his in the late sixties. I had booked Dali as the lead guest on a New York talk and variety show on WNEW-TV. Dali was naughty and amusing in our cab ride to the station, and suddenly he threw me the challenge "Dali will be *New Yorker* cover!" Without a butterfly, monocle, and top hat, he said, he would not do our show.

The butterfly was a tough hunt, but

we finally found a fake one in Woolworth's. A delighted Dali was hilarious for half an hour. And he didn't refuse to present the program's obligatory free performance, grandly painting his name with Surrealist flourishes. He left bearing his Tilley trophies.

VALERIE JENNINGS
New York City

RUSHDIE'S NOVELS

Julian Barnes's article about Salman Rushdie ("Staying Alive," February 21st) does a marvellous job of explicating the political and economic stakes surrounding Rushdie's *fatwa*. But it does not touch on another unfortunate point about Rushdie's case, which is that in all the turmoil Rushdie's work is being almost completely ignored. All his novels—and not just "The Satanic Verses"—are literary works of art and need to be appreciated as such. It is a well-known fact that many of the people doing the debating about Rushdie are quite uninterested in his literary genius. For any peaceful solution to result from the *fatwa*, people need to appreciate and understand the truly great nature of Rushdie's fiction.

JAINA SANGA
Cleveland, Ohio

MIGHTIER THAN THE SWORD

Recently, as I was waiting in bumper-to-bumper Caracas traffic for a light to change, I noticed a man standing by my open car window, demanding something. "*Cómo*?" I asked. He patiently repeated, "*Quédate quieta y dame tu anillo.*" Simultaneously, I noticed the five-inch blade he held near my left ear. As his attention shifted to the gold ring on my left hand, I used my right hand to pick up my February 14th issue of *The New Yorker*, and hurled it out the window at my would-be assailant. This proved an effective deterrent. He ran away without further comment, and I still have my ring. Fortunately, I was also able to retrieve my magazine before the traffic advanced.

CONSTANCE KIRKLAND
Caracas, Venezuela

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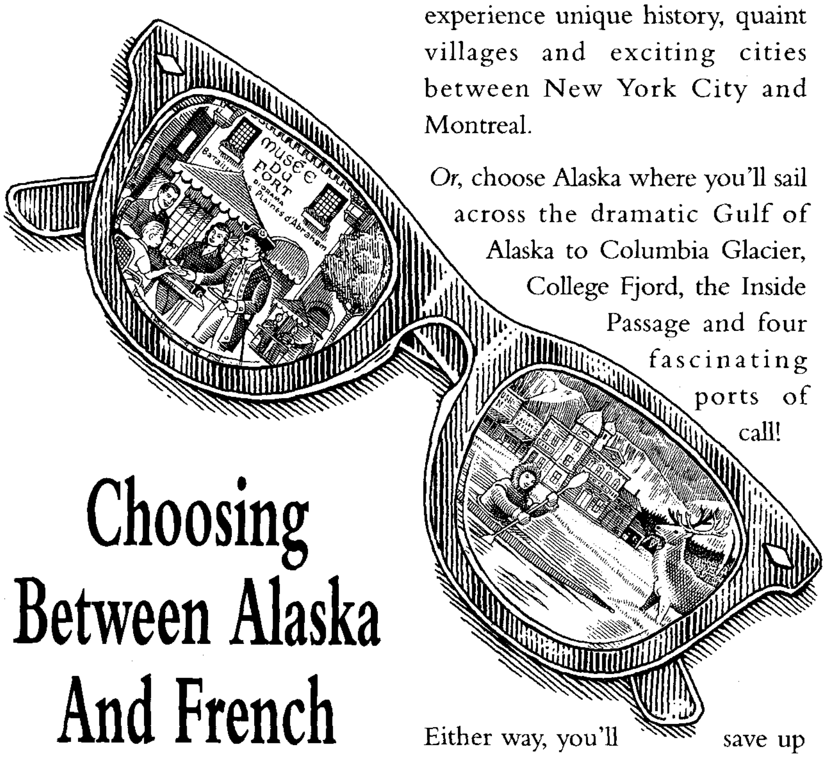

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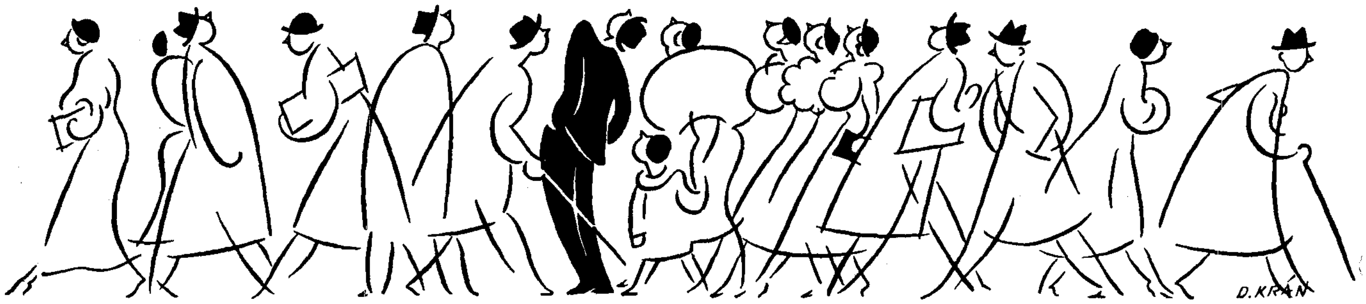

THE THEATRE

Get Naked

JERRY MITCHELL is a conspicuously talented Broadway dancer ("On Your Toes," Michael Bennett's lamentably unproduced "Scandal") and choreographer (he worked on "Putting It Together" and "Jerome Robbins' Broadway"). He is also a man with a mission: to put sex on the stage. It wasn't until he danced near-nude on a drum in "The Will Rogers Follies," however, that he realized how to capitalize on his calling. "Somebody came up to me after a performance," Mr. Mitchell says, "and told me I should do this kind of thing to raise money." He took the advice: since 1991, for the benefit of Broadway Cares/Equity Fights AIDS, he has been assembling the theatre's buffed bodies and unveiling them in what has become an eagerly awaited annual event, Broadway Bares.

This year's benefit, scheduled for March 13 at 9:30 at Club USA (218 West 47th Street; call 978-0208 for information about tickets, which are reasonably priced), includes at least sixty dancers, who are certain to elicit a lot of hooting, hollering, and even a proffered dollar or two. But this ain't no after-work strip joint. With its sex-positive formula of girls and gags and boys and beer, Broadway Bares updates burlesque. Taking his cue from the revivals of musicals popping up everywhere, Mr. Mitchell has decided to hot up show-tune standards. For example, "Beauty School Dropout," from "Grease," will spin into RuPaul's "Back to My Roots," and "Ascot Gavotte," from "My Fair Lady," will segue into "Vogue." (Madonna could cast her next road show from all the flesh cavorting here.) The carrying-on does have limits, though. "There'll be no genitalia," Mr. Mitchell warns. "These days, burlesque counts as a family show."

OPENINGS AND PREVIEWS

(Please call the phone number listed with the theatre for timetables and ticket information.)

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			9	10	11	12
13	14	15				

THE AMERICA PLAY—A play by Suzan-Lori Parks, with Gail Grate, Reggie Montgomery, and Michael Potts. Preview on March 9. Opens March 10 at 8. (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 598-7150.)

THE ARABIAN NIGHTS—Jenny Bacon is Scheherazade in Mary Zimmerman's adaptation of the classic tales. In previews. (Manhattan Theatre Club, at City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-1212.)

BEAUTY AND THE BEAST—A musical based on the 1991 Disney movie, featuring the songs of Alan Menken and Howard Ashman, as well as a few new ones by Mr. Menken and Tim Rice. With Susan Egan, Terrence Mann, and Tom Bosley. In previews. (Palace, Broadway at 47th St. 307-4100.)

BLACK—Joyce Carol Oates looks at race and relationships in this play. Previews through March 14. Opens March 15 at 8. (INTAR, 420 W. 42nd St. 873-3767.)

CAROUSEL—Michael Hayden is Billy Bigelow in this production of Rodgers and Hammerstein's 1945 musical, which comes to New York via London's Royal National Theatre. Nicholas Hytner directed. In previews. (Vivian Beaumont, Lincoln Center. 239-6200.)

THE DAY THE BRONX DIED—Akili Prince, Luis A. Laporte, Jr., and Neal Huff portray three teenage friends—two black, one Jewish—in Michael Henry Brown's play. In previews. (American Jewish Theatre, 307 W. 26th St. 633-9797.)

THE FLOWERING PEACH—Eli Wallach and Anne Jackson have the leads in this National Actors Theatre revival of Clifford Odets' 1954 play. Also with Josh Mostel. In previews. (Lyceum, 149 W. 45th St. 239-6280.)

NEW YORK ROCK—Yoko Ono's new rock musical. In previews. (WPA Theatre, 519 W. 23rd St. 206-0523.)

THE NEW YORKERS—A concert version of the 1930 Cole Porter musical. The performers include John Cunningham, Jill O'Hara, and Lannyl Stephens. (Town Hall, 123 W. 43rd St. 840-2824. March 14 at 8.)

TITUS ANDRONICUS—Robert Stattel has the title role in Shakespeare's tragedy. This Theatre for a New Audience version was directed by Julie Taymor. Previews through March 11. Opens March 12 at 8 and runs through March 26. (St. Clement's, 423 W. 46th St. 279-4200.)

TWILIGHT: LOS ANGELES, 1992—Anna Deavere Smith's one-woman show, which premièred at L.A.'s Mark Taper Forum last year. In previews. After a four-week run at the Public, the play will move to Broadway. (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 598-7150.)

OPENED RECENTLY

ALL IN THE TIMING—Six sparkling one-act comedies by David Ives. (John Houseman, 450 W. 42nd St. 239-6200.)

ANGELS IN AMERICA—"Perestroika," the second half of Tony Kushner's "Angels in America," is a masterpiece. Epic in scope, superbly acted, and directed with passionate restraint by George C. Wolfe, the play employs an original, impressionistic theatrical vocabulary to show us the heart of a new age. It runs in repertory with the first half, "Millennium Approaches." ("Perestroika" was reviewed in our issue of 12/13/93; "Millennium Approaches," 5/31/93.) (Walter Kerr, 219 W. 48th St. 239-6200.)

AS YOU LIKE IT—This production of Shakespeare's comedy is presented by the Willow Cabin Theatre Company. (Judith Anderson, 422 W. 42nd St. 886-1889. Closes March 27.)

AVENUE X—An a-cappella musical, by John Jiler and Ray Leslee, about racial disharmony in a tough neighborhood in Brooklyn in the early sixties. Its chief pleasures are some lovely doo-wop harmonies and the sensational, roof-raising voice of Alvaleta Guess. (Playwrights Horizons, 416 W. 42nd St. 279-4200.)

THE BIRTHDAY PARTY—The Independent Theatre Company's production of this 1958 play by Harold Pinter summons up the unnerving mixture of brutality and banality that Pinter requires. The director, Dan Tedlie, has cleared a path through the chaotic proceedings. (House of Candles Theatre, 99 Stanton St. 353-3088. Closes March 19.)

BLOWN SIDEWAYS THROUGH LIFE—In her sixty-fifth job, Claudia Shear charmingly and observantly tells us about her previous sixty-four, which have ranged from working in a hardware store to being a "phone girl" at a whorehouse, with a stint as a Bloomingdale's cosmetics salesgirl thrown in. (Cherry Lane, 38 Commerce St. 989-2285.)

A BODY OF WATER—In playwright Jenna Zark's New York début, a young Midwestern Jewish hairdresser, in marital and spiritual crisis, visits an Orthodox mikvah (or ritual bathhouse) and is counselled by a devout and apparently contented married woman whose belief in Jewish law leads to her own crisis. Zark has put theological matters to lively dramatic use. With Jodi Thelen, Stephanie Roth, and Bruce MacVittie. Caroline Kava directed. (Circle Repertory Company Theatre, 99 Seventh Ave. S. 924-7100. Closes March 12.)

CYRANO: THE MUSICAL—The nose have it. (Neil Simon, 250 W. 52nd St. 307-4100.)

DAMN YANKEES—Victor Garber and Bebe Neuwirth star in the first Broadway revival of the 1955 musical by George Abbott and Douglass Wallop (book) and Richard Adler and Jerry Ross (score and lyrics). (Marquis, Broadway at 45th St. 307-4100.)

ESCAPE FROM PARADISE—Regina Taylor wrote and performs in a one-woman show about a black magazine editor in her thirties who, one day, instead of going to work went to Italy. The AWOL editor enacts humorous, absurd, and occasionally haunting stories about everyone from her grandmother to her transvestite brother to the Italian man with whom she has a one-night stand. Taylor's chameleon-like changes from character to character are generally marvellous. Directed by Anne Bogart. (Circle Repertory Company Theatre, 99 Seventh Ave. S. 924-7100. Closes March 13.)

FAMILY SECRETS—Sherry Glaser is the sole, physically adept, very funny performer in this comedy about a Jewish family, which she wrote with Greg Howells. (Westside Theatre, 407 W. 43rd St. 307-4100.)

Four Dogs and a Bone—The "bone" of John Patrick Shanley's satiric comedy is a movie, and the "four dogs" are its producer, writer, and two actresses, who together make the funniest foursome in town. (11/15/93) (Lucille Lortel, 121 Christopher St. 924-8782.)

Hello Again—Suggested by Arthur Schnitzler's play "La Ronde," Michael John LaChiusa's new musical travels through various American decades to tell a bittersweet story of hetero- and homosexual seductions and betrayals. LaChiusa is lucky to have director and choreographer Graciela Daniele: her streamlined and sexy stage pictures make the music seem better than it is. Of the excellent cast of ten, Judy Blazer and John Cameron Mitchell are especially effective. (2/21/94) (Mitzi E. Newhouse, Lincoln Center. 239-6200. Closes March 27.)

Innocent Eréndira—An English-language adaptation of Gabriel García Márquez's novella, starring Miriam Colón. A joint production of Repertorio Español and the Puerto Rican Traveling Theatre. (Gramercy Arts Theatre, 138 E. 27th St. 889-2850. Closes March 20.)

Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat—Like a kaleidoscope, Andrew Lloyd Webber's flippant new mega-version of his first musical is bright, ever-changing, and utterly meaningless. (Minskoff, 45th St. west of Broadway. 307-4100.)

Kiss of the Spider Woman—A musical, based on the novel by Manuel Puig, with a distinguished book by Terrence McNally and a star performance by the redoubtable Chita Rivera in the title role. Harold Prince was the director. The songs are by John Kander and Fred Ebb. (5/24/93) (Broadhurst, 235 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)

Laughter on the 23rd Floor—Neil Simon's twenty-seventh Broadway play, about a group of writers for a fictionalized version of "Your Show of Shows," is one of his finest comic efforts. The subject allows Simon to do what he does best: tell jokes about the making of laughs. Directed by Jerry Zaks, with Mark Linn-Baker, Lewis J. Stadlen, Nathan Lane, Ron Orbach, John Slattery, and J. K. Simmons. (12/20/93) (Richard Rodgers, 226 W. 46th St. 307-4100.)

Little Eyolf—Ibsen's themes seem a bit shopworn in this late play, but there are some deeply moving scenes in which an estranged husband and wife deal with the death of their child. The cast is very fine, particularly Robin Leslie Brown as the aunt and Mark Kenneth Smaltz as the father. Joanne Camp is the mother. Solidly directed by Shepard Sobel. (Pearl, 125 W. 22nd St. 645-7708. Closes March 19.)

The Mayor of Boys Town—A one-man play about the Nebraska institution, written and performed by Barnaby Spring. (American Place, 111 W. 46th St. 840-3074.)

My Fair Lady—Howard Davies' genial new production of the Lerner and Loewe musical. Richard Chamberlain is all charm and suave good looks as Professor Henry Higgins, and Melissa Errico lends a fine voice and an attractive presence to the role of Eliza. With excellent support from Paxton Whitehead, Dolores Sutton, and Julian Holloway. (1/17/94) (Virginia, 245 W. 52nd St. 239-6200.)

My Head Was a Sledgehammer—Richard Foreman's new play, performed by his Ontological-Hysteric Theatre. (St. Mark's In-the-Bouwerie, Second Ave. at 10th St. 533-4650. Closes March 27.)

No Man's Land—Christopher Plummer and Jason Robards star in Harold Pinter's 1975 play. (Roundabout, Broadway at 45th St. 869-8400. Closes March 20.)

Old New York: False Dawn—The New York Art Theatre Institute's charming version of the first chapter of Edith Wharton's novella "Old New York." (Old Merchant's House Museum, 29 E. 4th St. 226-6211.)

Pounding Nails in the Floor with My Forehead—The latest solo show by the boss of monologuists, Eric Bogosian, is basically a continuation of his 1990 "Sex, Drugs, Rock & Roll": portraits of a dozen alarming characters—the manic, the depressive, the deluded, and the deranged—who have squatter's rights in Bogosian's mind. (2/21/94) (Minetta Lane Theatre, 18 Minetta Lane, east of Sixth Ave., between W. 3rd and Bleecker Sts. 307-4100.)

Ricky Jay & His 52 Assistants—With a Mephistophelean smoothness, the master sleight-of-hand artist discourses on the history of trickery and performs illusions that will amaze even those who wouldn't normally go out of their way to see card tricks. Under the direction of David Mamet, who is right at home in the slightly sinister man's world of magic, Mr. Jay makes willing and delighted fools of his audience. (Second Stage, Broadway at 76th St. 239-6200.)

The Sacrifice of Mmbatho (Daughter of Nebo)—Johannesburg's Market Theatre examines the differences between traditional and modern law in this music-theatre piece about a man who sacrifices his daughter. Conceived and directed by Hilary Blecher, with music by Victor N'toni and Rashid Lani. (Brooklyn Academy of Music, 30 Lafayette Ave. 1-718 636-4100. Closes March 13.)

She Loves Me—The Roundabout's production of the 1963 Bock-Harnick-Masteroff musical. (Brooks Atkinson, 256 W. 47th St. 307-4100.)

Stomp—A group of eight British rhythm specialists who use unconventional percussion instruments. The noise is terrific. (Orpheum, 126 Second Ave., at 8th St. 477-2477.)

Three Birds Alighting on a Field—Timberlake Wertenbaker's satire of the London art world of the eighties, an import from London's Royal Court, has a rather heavy hand when it comes to parcelling out blame for the degradation of English values, but Max Stafford-Clark's direction has elicited good performances from Harriet Walter, Zach Grenier, and Daniel Gerroll. (2/21/94) (Manhattan Theatre Club, at City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-1212. Closes March 27.)

Three Tall Women—A moving, poetic play by Edward Albee, with Jordan Baker, Myra Carter, and Marian Seldes representing three generations of women trying to sort out their pasts. Directed by Lawrence Sacharow. (Vineyard Theatre, 108 E. 15th St. 353-3874. Closes March 13.)

Unfinished Stories—A play by Sybille Pearson, with Christopher Collet, E. Katherine Kerr, Laurence Luckinbill, and Joseph Wiseman. (Reviewed in this issue.) (New York Theatre Workshop, 79 E. 4th St. 302-6989. Closes March 13.)

LONG RUNS

beau jest: Lamb's, 130 W. 44th St. 997-1780. . . . **blood brothers:** Music Box, 239 W. 45th St. 239-6200. . . . **blue man group/tubes:** Astor Place Theatre, 434 Lafayette St. 254-4370. . . . **cats:** Winter Garden, Broadway at 50th St. 239-6200. . . . **crazy for you:** Shubert, 225 W. 44th St. 239-6200. . . . **the fantasticks:** Sullivan Street Playhouse, 181 Sullivan St., at Bleecker St. 674-3838. . . . **forever plaid:** Steve McGraw's, 158 W. 72nd St. 595-7400. . . . **guys and dolls:** Martin Beck, 302 W. 45th St. 239-6200. . . . **les misérables:** Imperial, 249 W. 45th St. 239-6200. . . . **miss saigon:** Broadway Theatre, Broadway at 53rd St. 239-6200. . . . **nunsense:** Douglas Fairbanks, 432 W. 42nd St. 239-4321. . . . **perfect crime:** Duffy, 1553 Broadway, at 46th St. 695-3401. . . . **the phantom of the opera:** Majestic, 245 W. 44th St. 239-6200. . . . **the sisters rosensweig:** Ethel Barrymore, 243 W. 47th St. 239-6200. . . . **tony n' tina's wedding:** St. John's Church, 81 Christopher St. 279-4200. . . . **the who's tommy:** St. James, 246 W. 44th St. 239-6200.

IN ANOTHER CATEGORY—PERFORMANCE ART, ETC.

"Jerry Lewis . . . Unlimited"—Mr. Lewis will sing, dance, conduct the Jerry Lewis orchestra, and, presumably, tickle some funny bones in this performance. (Walt Whitman Hall, Brooklyn Center for the Performing Arts, Brooklyn College. 1-718 951-4500. March 13 at 2.)

Linda Mancini—In her new performance piece, "Tip or Die." (P.S. 122, 150 First Ave., at 9th St. 477-5288. March 10-13 at 7:30. Through March 20.)

Camryn Manheim—Performing her one-woman show "Wake Up, I'm Fat!" (Second Stage, Broadway at 76th St. 787-8302. March 14 at 8.)

Regina Taylor in "Escape from Paradise."

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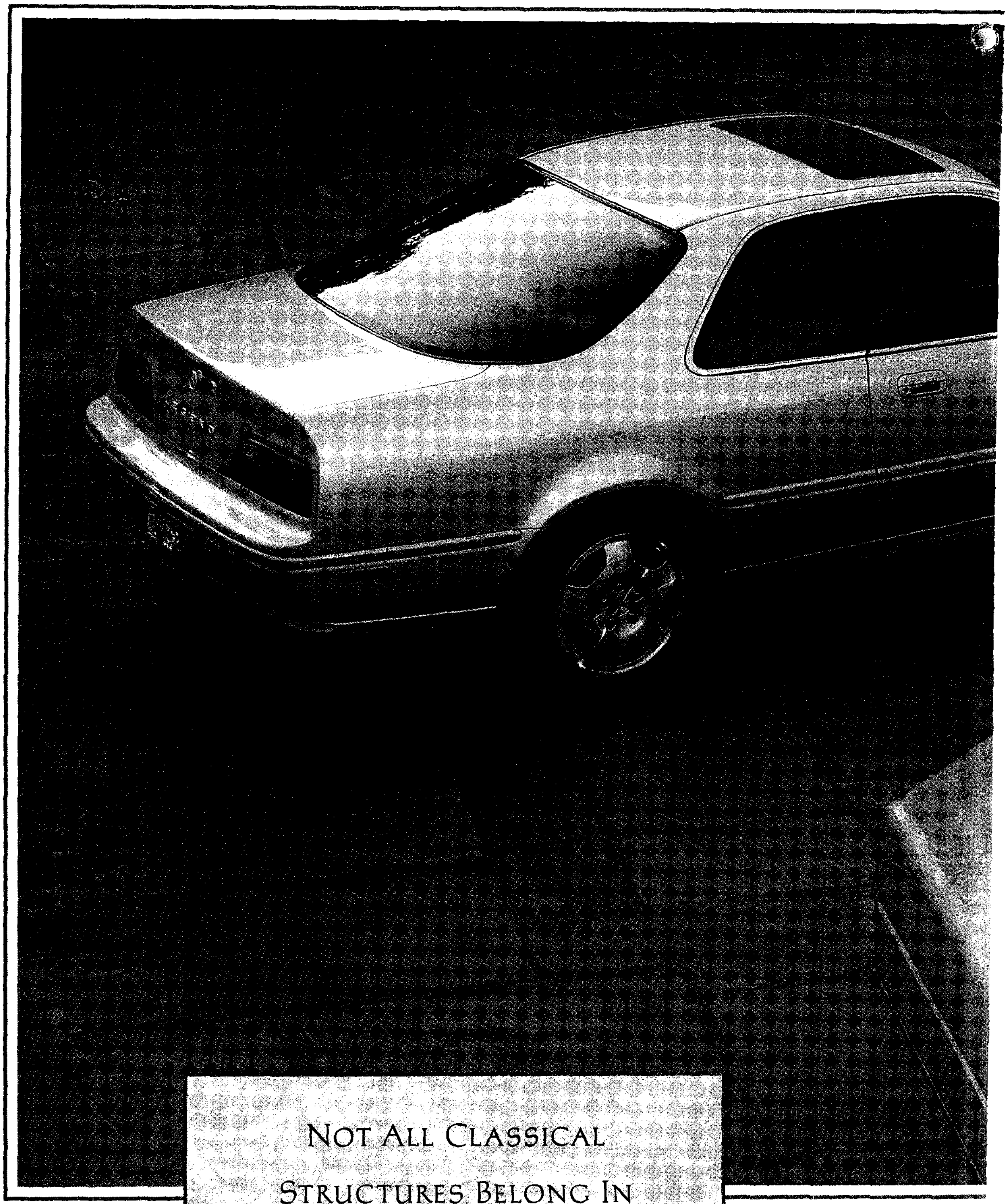

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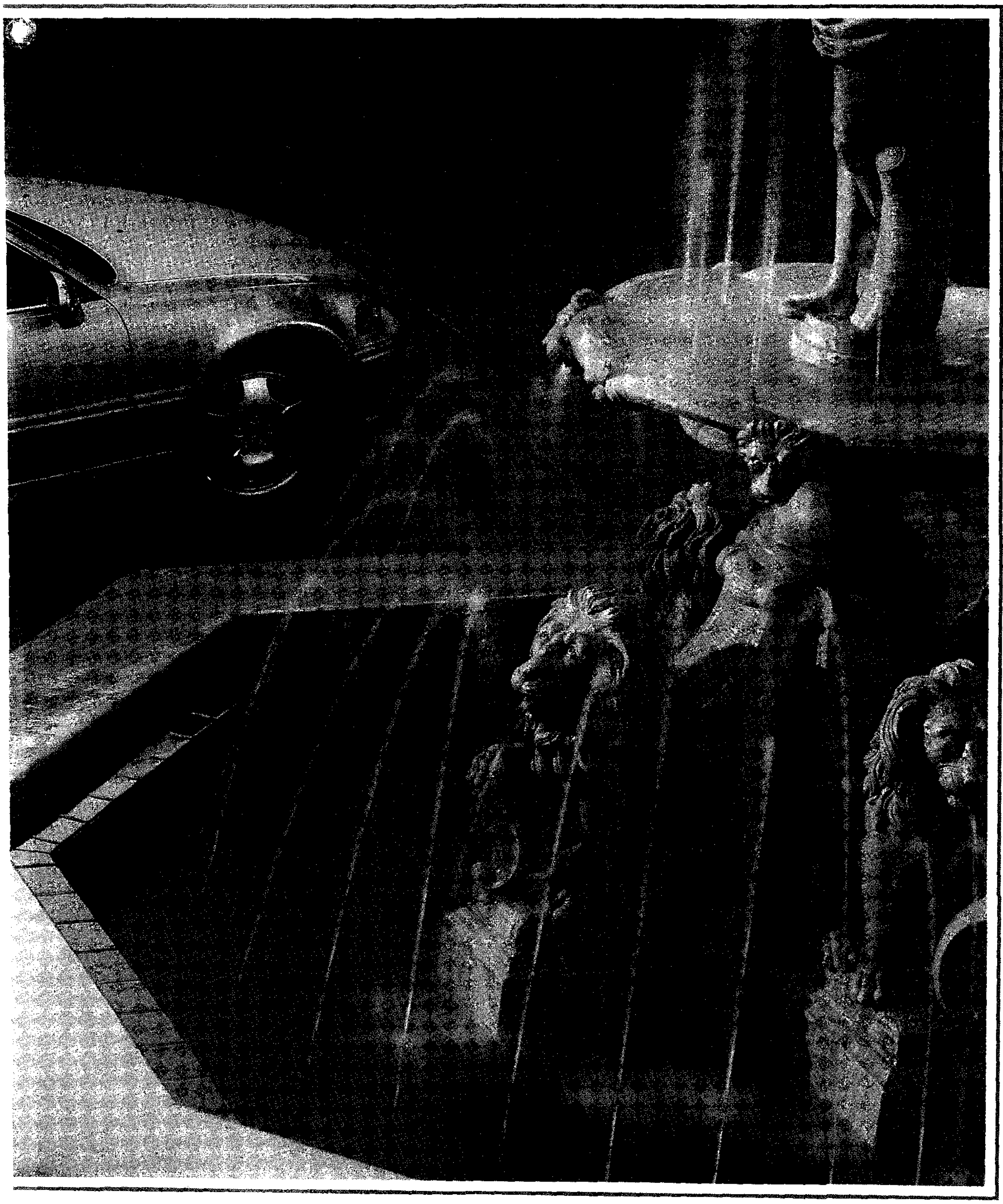

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DANCE

Mitchell's Mix

Dance Theatre of Harlem's celebration of its twenty-fifth anniversary, with a two-and-a-half-week engagement at the New York State Theatre, will include the première of Ron Cunningham's "Etosha" and the revival of Valerie Bettis's "A Streetcar Named Desire." As always, the programs will display dancing that is at once technically astute and full of fire and heart. The company's founder and director, Arthur Mitchell, says, "We give an evening of theatrical dance founded in a classical tradition," but, he adds, "eclecticism is our strength." Mitchell's own career has combined both: he danced with George Balanchine's New York City Ballet for fifteen years before opening his school in Harlem.

In 1968, in classes held in a Harlem garage, Mitchell began introducing neighborhood children to the joy and discipline of his art. In an era resistant to the very idea of black ballet dancers, D.T.H., with the help of dancers like Ronald Perry and Virginia Johnson (both of whom will perform this season), built its reputation for rigor and quality. "The myth that blacks could not do classical work has been blown," declares Mitchell. "Now there's a wealth of minority dancers all over." Like other independent performance companies, D.T.H. faces obstacles these days that are more financial than social. But Mitchell started from scratch and found his way to Lincoln Center in no time flat. He's not likely to stop now.

Dance Theatre of Harlem—March 11 at 8, March 12 at 2 and 8, and March 13 at 1:30 *and 7:30:* "*Firebird,*" "*Footprints* Dressed in Red," and "A Song for Dead Warriors." . . . ¶ March 15 at 8: "The River," "Equus," and "Fête Noire." (New York State Theatre. 870-5570.)

Merce Cunningham Dance Company—March 9 at 8: "Inlets 2," "Doubletoss," and "Breakers" (première). . . . ¶ March 10 at 8: "Beach Birds," "Doubletoss," and "CRWDSPCR." . . . ¶ March 11 at 8: "Change of Address" and "Enter." . . . ¶ March 12 at 2: "Inlets 2," "Change of Address," and "Breakers." . . . ¶ March 12 at 8: "CRWDSPCR" and "Enter." . . . ¶ March 13 at 3: "Beach Birds," "Doubletoss," and "CRWDSPCR." . . . ¶ March 15 at 8: "Touchbase," "Sounddance," and "Breakers." (City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-1212.)

Feld Ballets/NY—March 9 at 8: "Common Ground," "La Vida," "Kore," and "MRI." . . . ¶ March 10 at 8: "Play Bach," "Echo," "Evoe," and "Doghead & Godcatchers." . . . ¶ March 11 at 8: "La Vida," "Ion," "Doo Dah Day," and "Skara Brae." . . . ¶ March 12 at 2: A program titled "Kids Dance," in which students of the New Ballet School perform "Hello Fancy," "*23 Skidoo,*" "*The Envelope,*" and "Half Time." . . . ¶ March 12 at 8: "Aurora I," "La Vida," "Kore," and "The Jig Is Up." . . . ¶ March 13 at 2: "Play Bach," "Asia," "Clave," and "Doo Dah Day." . . . ¶ March 13 at 7:30: "Aurora I," "Skara Brae," and "Doghead & Godcatchers." . . . ¶ March 15 at 8: "Contra Pose," "Clave," "Evoe," and "Doo Dah Day." (Joyce Theatre, 175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 242-0800.)

NIGHT LIFE

Cocteau Party

Throughout their twelve-year career, the Cocteau Twins have kept rock critics flipping through the thesaurus, trying to find the right words to describe their music—"vaporous," "shimmering," and "celestial" are big favorites. Much of the impressionistic verbiage is justified: the Scottish band's distinctive sound is built around droning layers of heavily processed guitar and faux-Esperanto vocalization, qualities that don't exactly lend themselves to concrete description. The problem is exacerbated by the Twins' dread of the confessional interview. "We're really not the greatest self-publicists in the world," says the bassist, Simon Raymonde. (Vocalist Elizabeth Fraser and guitarist Robin Guthrie make up the rest of the group.) "For years we wouldn't talk about our music. The lyrics were vague, the sleeves were vague. . . . We were frightened—it's stupid, but that's just the way it was. At least the critics weren't slagging us off."

The critics certainly aren't slagging off the Cocteau Twins' excellent new record, "Four-Calendar Café," which the band supports with a gig this Saturday at Roseland and a rare television appearance, on the "Tonight Show" (April 4). "I think it's amazing that we got asked," says Raymonde. "We're trying not to think too much about it." Can viewers expect the profoundly shy Twins to sit down and have a chat with Jay? "I hope not," Raymonde says. "I mean, three people just staring at each other nervously on the sofa? No way."

CONCERTS

Gerry Mulligan and the Billy Taylor Trio—It's time to separate Mulligan the historical icon from Mulligan the present-day improviser. His grand moments—the Birth of the Cool, the cool-school quartet with Chet Baker, the resourceful sextet with Zoot Sims, the epochal big band—are touchstones that obscure the fact that today Mulligan still stands as one of the great jazz soloists. With Taylor's no-fuss trio behind him, Mulligan can embroider sweeping melodies on his baritone saxophone, and his improvisations are precise and beautiful. A "Highlights in Jazz" concert. (Pace Downtown Theatre, Spruce St. between Nassau and Gold Sts. 346-1715. March 10 at 8.)

Altan—It's difficult to imagine traditional Celtic music sounding any more vital than when it's being performed by this electrifying young supergroup from Dublin. Formed in the late eighties by Belfast-born flutist Frankie Kennedy and his wife, the Donegal fiddler and heart-melting singer Mairéad Ní Mhaonaigh, Altan features an extraordinary lineup of supporting players that includes Ciaran Tourish on second fiddle and Ciaran Curran on bouzouki. The band has already set new standards of excellence in Irish music. (Considering that this is a field that, like bluegrass, takes excellence for granted, that's nothing to shake a shillelagh at.) "Island Angel," Altan's latest release, on a wonderful little Connecticut label called Green Linnet, finds the group, as always, refusing to stand pat while there are new jigs, reels, and mazurkas to conquer. If you've never seen them before, brace yourself: *they really do leave audiences breathless.* (Town Hall, 123 W. 43rd St. 840-2824. March 12 at 8.)

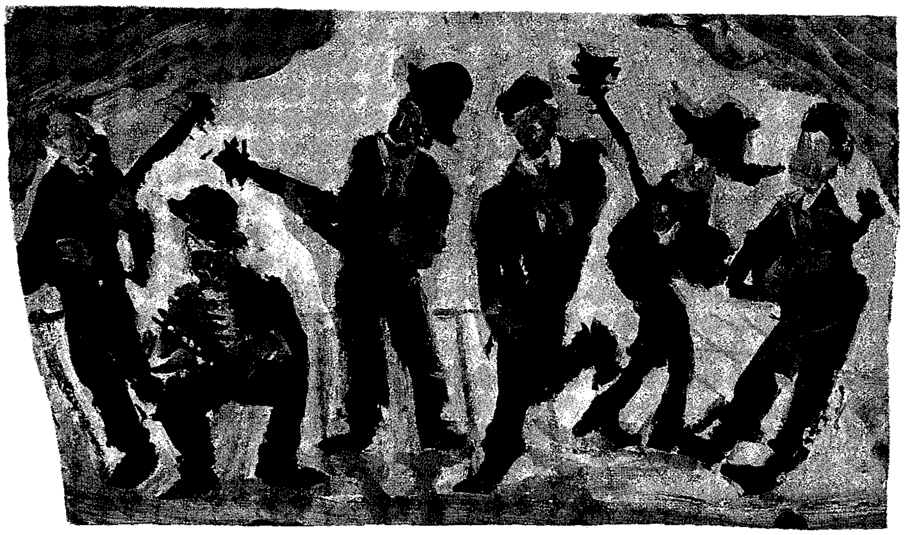
The Pogues—One of the greatest disreputable bands in rock history carries on without its brilliant and dissipated original songwriter and lead singer, Shane MacGowan, who made sublime art out of the idea of drunkenly winging it. Although those days are gone, the Pogues' first post-MacGowan album, "Waiting for Herb," is much more than a faint echo of the Irish band's triumphant eighties albums, and they have a magical back catalogue of songs to rely on—lurching punk reels, heartbreaking ballads, and epic anthems. Spider Stacy is handling the lead vocals on this tour. (Beacon Theatre, Broadway at 74th St. 496-7070. March 13 at 8.)

Karen Akers—Winter Garden, World Financial Center, Battery Park City. March 9 at 6:30. No tickets necessary.

TanaReid Quintet—Miller Theatre, Columbia University, Broadway at 116th St. 854-7799. March 11 at 8.

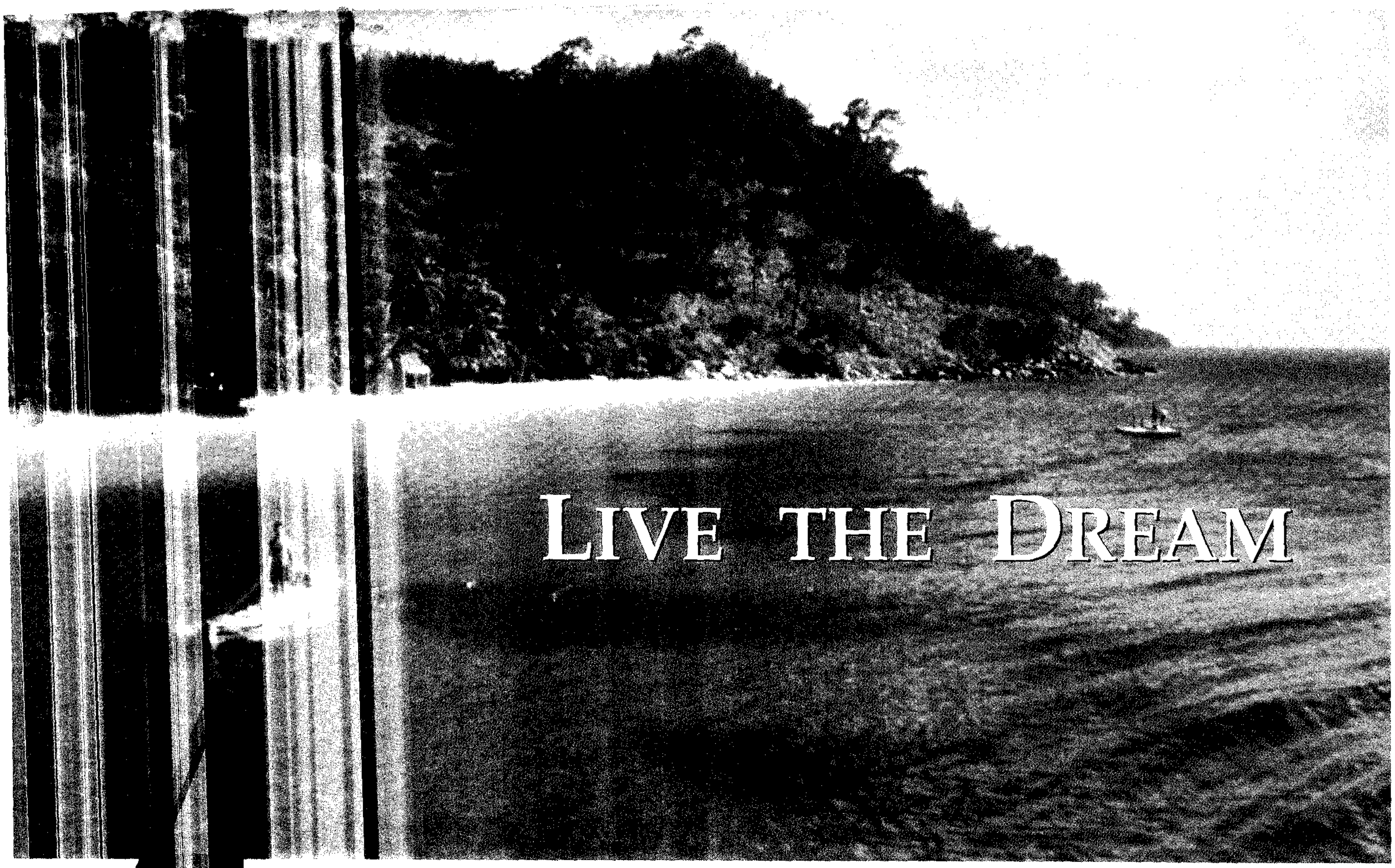
Alem Kassimov Ensemble—Playing the music of Azerbaijan. (Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. 864-5400. March 11 at 8.)

Hugh Masekela and Miriam Makeba—Manhattan Center, 311 W. 34th St. March 11 at 8. For information about tickets, call 777-0600.



ROBERT KARSTART

The Pogues at the Beacon Theatre.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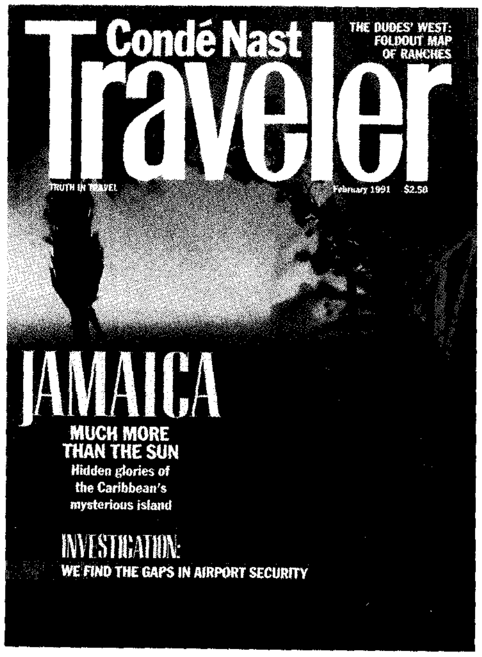
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NIGHT LIFE—Cont'd

The Fureys—Carnegie Hall. 247-7800. March 13 at 2.

Heavenly Jazz—Presenting Bob Kindred, Gene Bertoncini, Michael Moore, and John Kaye. (Church of the Heavenly Rest, Fifth Ave. at 90th St. March 13 at 5. Tickets at the door on the afternoon of the concert.)

Frank Patterson—With Eily O'Grady, the Hibernian Choir, the Little Gaelic Singers & Harpists of New York, and many other Irish performers. (Carnegie Hall. 247-7800. March 14 at 8.)

JAZZ AND BLUES

Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St., near Sixth Ave. (475-8592)—Jazz, mirrors, and a gift shop. **TITO PUENTE'S GOLDEN LATIN JAZZ ALL-STARS** continue through March 13. Starting March 15: the **JIMMY MC GRIFF–HANK CRAWFORD** quartet. Dining.

Bradley's, 70 University Pl., at 11th St. (228-6440)—New York's premier jazz-piano room is currently celebrating its twenty-fifth anniversary. Through March 13, pianists **KENNY BARRON** and **MULGREW MILLER** go one-on-one. Miller is a fleet and aggressive player. In Barron, he's taking on one of the true monsters. Dining.

The Cooler, 416 W. 14th St. (229-0785)—An authentic old locker deep in the heart of the meat district, now converted into a comfortable, banquette-lined paradise. The **JONAS HELLBORG** band performs on March 11-12.

Knickerbocker, 33 University Pl., at 9th St. (228-8490)—Brass rails, vintage posters, Hirschfeld drawings, and a piano. **VALERIE CAPERS** and **JOHN ROBINSON** are here through March 12.

Knitting Factory, 47 E. Houston St., near Mulberry St. (219-3055)—This club, run by a couple of forward-looking Wisconsinites, specializes in all manner of neo-this and post-that ensembles. The atmosphere is low-key, low-budget bohemian. **DR. NERVE** appears on March 12.

Sounds of Brazil, 204 Varick St., at W. Houston St. (243-4940)—A great grass hut with a fruit-and-bamboo motif, dedicated to calypso, reggae, and bossa nova. Sax great **TOM SCOTT** plays on March 9-10. Closed Sundays. Dining.

Sweet Basil, 88 Seventh Ave. S., at Bleecker St. (242-1785)—A jazz outpost where the musicians are always top-shelf. **GIL GOLDSTEIN'S** big band is in action on Mondays. Dining.

Tavern on the Green, Central Park W. at 67th St. (873-3200)—This legendary tourist haven makes serious jazz fans welcome in the Chestnut Room. It resembles a hunting lodge and is every bit as over the top as the rest of the establishment, but the bookings are impressive. Through March 13: **MARIAN MC PARTLAND.** As jazz institutions go, McPartland is pretty frisky. Her piano work is as elegant as ever, but her continuing vigor and ever-expanding repertoire mark a distinct, if quiet, resurgence. Taking her lead from Bill Evans, McPartland has developed an ear for integrating bass and drums brilliantly within her own democratic trios. **ROLAND HANNA** starts an engagement on March 15.

Village Vanguard, 178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (255-4037)—The **JOE LOVANO** quintet performs through March 13. Lovano's fortieth birthday is history, and he could easily pass for your local pizza guy, but despite this unfashionable profile, there isn't a more satisfying saxophonist on the scene. Lovano knows his horn and his history but has no need for the self-imposed shackles of conservatism: in Lovano's world, it's possible to love Ornette Coleman as much as you do Stan Getz. Lovano has found a middle ground, revelling in openhearted swing yet willing to bust open tone and harmony when passion dictates. His intensity on up-tempo numbers is transformed into an equally powerful romantic density on ballads. Lovano's longtime associate Tom Harrell will be on trumpet, along with Billy Hart on drums and Anthony Cox on bass.

Visiones, 125 Macdougal St., at W. 3rd St. (673-5576)—A tiny, low-key supper club where the jazz, like the Spanish-American cuisine, can take on a spicy, multicultural flavor. The **MARVIN (SMITTY) SMITH** quintet performs March 10-12.

STANDARDS AND CABARET

Algonquin Hotel, 59 W. 44th St. (840-6800)—This week, **STEVE ROSS** and **JEANNE LEHMAN** continue their monthlong engagement, a tribute titled "Noel Coward and His Ladies," in the Oak Room. Dining.

Carlyle Hotel, Madison Ave. at 76th St. (744-1600)—**EARTHA KITT** wraps up her six-week run. Now in her sixties, Kitt is still a fierce and funny performer with a feral grip on her audience. **MICHAEL FEINSTEIN** begins an engagement on March 15. . . . ¶ Across the hall, in Bemelmans Bar, **RONNY WHYTE** presides at the piano.

Michael's Pub, 211 E. 55th St. (758-2272)—**VERNEL BAGNERIS** is here for an extended run. On Mondays, Woody Allen continues his night job as clarinet player in the **NEW ORLEANS FUNERAL AND RAGTIME ORCHESTRA,** a Dixieland-jazz ensemble now in its twentieth year.

Rainbow & Stars, 30 Rockefeller Plaza. (632-5000)—A plush, old-fashioned night club, sixty-five floors above it all, complete with Art Deco fixtures, intimate glitter, and a panoramic view as dizzying as the tab. **SUZANNAH MC CORKLE,** here through March 26, should feel at home in this upscale aerie; both she and the club know how to be sophisticated without making a big deal about it. Literate and well informed on the history of her art, McCorkle will take her audience on a jazz-inflected stroll through the last seventy years of American popular song, stopping along the way to breathe in the rarefied atmosphere of Porter, Mercer, Arlen, and the others. Her fellow-travellers: pianist Allen Farnham, bassist Chip Jackson, and drummer Warren Odze. Closed Mondays.

RECORD STORE ARRIVALS

A highly selective list of new releases we're curious to hear.

ELVIS COSTELLO, "Brutal Youth" (Warner Brothers).

SOUNDGARDEN, "Superunknown" (A&M).

SAM PHILLIPS, "Martinis & Bikinis" (Virgin).

DAVID LEE ROTH, "Your Filthy Little Mouth" (Reprise).

PAT MC LACHLAN, "Revelation" (Dos).

Russian Tea Room, 150 W. 57th St. (265-0947)—Singer-pianist **BARBARA CARROLL** is about to release a new disk (on DRG), but her admirers can get an earful on March 13, when she and bassist Jay Leonhart offer a sampling from the playlist, which includes some standards and two of Carroll's own compositions. The recording will be her sixteenth solo offering, happily timed to coincide with her sixteenth season at Bemelmans Bar, her home away from home. This rare midtown appearance moves her within blocks of her early gigs (in the late forties) as one of the first "girl pianists" to infiltrate the Fifty-second Street bop scene. Dining.

ROCK AND FOLK

Bottom Line, 15 W. 4th St., at Mercer St. (228-6300)—This week, the club continues its twentieth-anniversary celebration, which will run through early April. **PAM TILLIS** and **LEE ROY PARNELL** drop in on March 9. Mel Tillis's daughter is one of country's contemporary batch of Little Miss Dynamites who can mix rock and folk and country together in a hip, energetic, and swinging cocktail. Her most recent album, "Homeward-Looking Angel," was a gem, and she has a new one coming out this spring, so here's a good chance for a sneak preview. On March 10: doo-wop with **ROCKAPELLA.** On March 11, drummer extraordinaire **BILLY COBHAM** splits the bill with **ANDY SUMMERS** and **JOHN ETHERIDGE.** Ex-Police guitarist Summers and fellow-Brit Etheridge present a jazzy all-acoustic set that showcases material from their new album, "Invisible Threads." Enjoy an evening of harmonicas and telecasters with **JOHN MAYALL** and **DANNY GATTON** on March 12-13. John Mayall is best known (somewhat unfairly) as the man who introduced Eric Clapton to the world. His own band, the Bluesbreakers, was among the first of many British bands to mix Delta blues with loud electric guitars, a movement that later produced the Yardbirds, Cream, the Faces, and innumerable others. A gig with the Bluesbreakers was something of a launching pad for young talent: in addition to Clapton, John McVie and Mick Fleetwood (who went on to form Fleetwood Mac) and Mick Taylor (who later joined the Stones) all apprenticed with Mayall. Since the sixties, Mayall has released more than a dozen uneven records, but this rare performance will be something of a master class. Danny Gatton, the king of chicken-scratch guitar, is a blistering rockabilly player, whose effortless, almost comical mastery will make you dizzy.

Café Sin-é, 122 St. Marks Pl. (982-0370)—On March 10, catch Boston's **TALKING TO ANIMALS,** whose front woman, though operatically trained, sings with pure rock-and-roll abandon. New York's **TOM CLARK** arrives on March 11, offering what might be described as country grunge.

CBGB & OMFUG, 315 Bowery, at Bleecker St. (982-4052)—Rock and roll always sounds best in a dump, which may be why this legendary club is still thriving: the management has had the good sense not to renovate. In recent years, CB's has become something of an empire; the club is now flanked by a pizzeria/boutique on one side and a bar/performance space on the other—all your shopping needs taken care of in one convenient location. **CROSSFIRE CHOIR** is in on March 11. **PENNYWISE** and **OFFSPRING** headline on March 12.

China Club, 2130 Broadway, at 75th St. (877-1166)—A few years back, this was the place visiting rock stars went, after playing in bigger venues, to jam and pick up models. There's less action of that sort nowadays, but if you can get past the wannabe vibes, you can enjoy the occasional promising young band—usually of the hard-rock variety—that shows up here.

Downtime, 251 W. 30th St. (695-2747)—A friendly split-level bar with a dazzling quasi-Cubist paint job and an above-average pool table.

Fez, 380 Lafayette St. (533-7000)—A comfortable neo-Moroccan bar and lounge, hidden inside the Time Café, with satin couches and mosaic tables. The downstairs room, where bands perform, is rather plain in comparison, but still a sleek and comfortable spot to take in a show. **SUSAN MC KEOWN & THE CHANTING HOUSE** arrive on March 9. **THE NUDES** show up on March 12. Singer-guitarist Walter Parks was desperately seeking a cellist when he put an ad in the *Village Voice* a few years back. Stephanie Winters, who also sings, phoned Parks up and was immediately hired. The Nudes played their first downtown gig in April of 1991, and have been making beautiful, jazz-inflected folk music ever since. The **MINGUS BIG BAND** packs them in every Thursday. Dining.

Grand, 76 E. 13th St. (777-0600)—A serious room for serious rock-and-rolling. You can either vibrate up front, near a wall-o'-speakers, or lounge around the bar in the back and follow the show on a video monitor. Former Twisted Sister Dee Snider's got a new band these days, called **WIDOWMAKER,** and they're in on March 9, with guests Violent Industry, Lovemaker, and Attakk-U. On March 12: **CIRCLE OF DUST** and **WARGASM.**

Irving Plaza, 17 Irving Pl., at 15th St. (777-6800)—This sprawling two-floor establishment has been all things to all people: meeting hall, rock club, jazz club, Off Broadway theatre. College-rock heroes **BUFFALO TOM** arrive on March 9, with Poster Children. **JEFFERSON STARSHIP** lands on March 12, featuring members of the original sixties incarnation of Jefferson Airplane, plus a guest vocalist, Darby Gould. Here's hoping no lawsuits against ex-bandmates will be announced, and that the reprising of the Starship's god-awful radio staples will be kept to a minimum. . . . ¶ The Swing Dance Society gathers here every Sunday night, at the Continental Club. The dancers all share a passion for the Lindy Hop, a dance that involves a lot of whirling and the occasional display of underwear. Sets from eight until midnight. For information on the society, call 696-9737.

Manny's Car Wash, 1558 Third Ave., at 87th St. (369-2583)—The Upper East Side Blues. **TOUT LE MONDE** arrives on March 9; the **HUDSON RIVER RATS** come out to play on March 12.

Maxwell's, 1039 Washington St., Hoboken. (1-201 798-4064)—Many of the bands that play here today will be playing somewhere more expensive tomorrow. **GIGANTIC** and **HYPNOLOVEWHEEL** appear on March 12.

Roseland, 239 W. 52nd St. (247-0200)—The **COCTEAU TWINS** are in on March 12, with **LUNA.**

Tramps, 51 W. 21st St. (727-7788)—A broad, spacious, and agreeable club, near what was once called Ladies' Mile but might now be termed the pool-hall district. On March 10, the country singer and former Outlaw **BILLY JOE SHAVER** swings into town. Better known as a songwriter—his tunes have been recorded by Waylon Jennings, the Allman Brothers, Jerry Lee Lewis, and Elvis, to name a few—this native of Corsicana, Texas, is touring on the strength of his newest record, "Tramp on Your Street." His band includes his son Eddy, who plays some badass guitar on that critically lauded disk. The **WORLD FAMOUS BLUE JAYS** are also on the bill. **TROUBLE FUNK** is in on March 11.

Wetlands, 161 Hudson St. (966-4225)—A warehouse complex for neo-hippies and other party animals. The **STEVE MORSE** band plays on March 10, with guest **RANDY JACKSON.** Morse is best know as ur-guitarist for the defunct country-fusion band Dixie Dregs (né the Dregs), a vehicle for his awesome, if occasionally pointless, technique.

ART

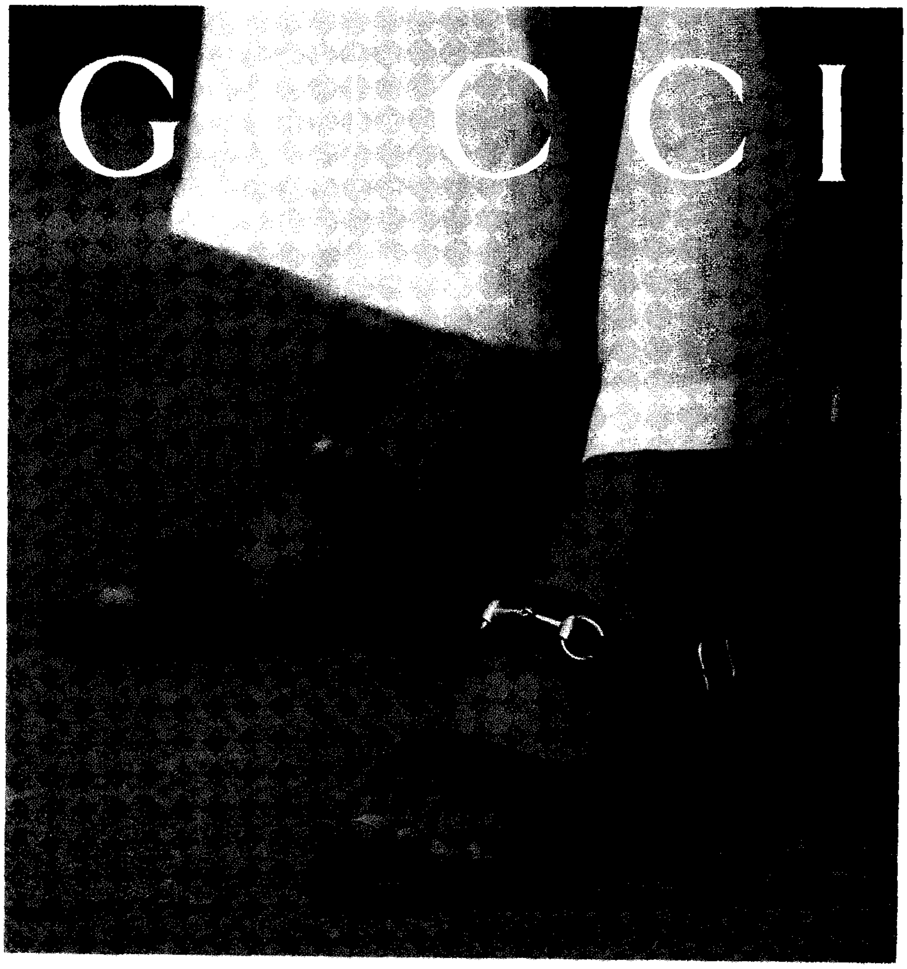
Northern Exposure

"THE GOLDEN AGE OF DANISH PAINTING," at the Met (through April 24), attempts to broaden one's perception of this Scandinavian kingdom—beyond Hans Christian Andersen, Kierkegaard, and "I Am Curious Yellow." The Danish efflorescence was relatively brief—from about 1790 to 1850—and it was generated almost entirely by a single institution: the Royal Academy of Fine Arts in Copenhagen, founded in 1754 by Frederik V to foster artistic service to the court. The Academy, however, became more than a provincial affair, and was soon attracting as students such German painters as Philipp Otto Runge and Caspar David Friedrich.

Although the artists here worked in many genres, portraiture and landscape remain the highlights. The dean of Danish painting, Christoffer Wilhelm Eckersberg (1785-1853), excelled in both. His portrait of Mme. Frederikke Christine Schmidt (1818) conveys a spirit of sober Protestant prosperity comfortably ensconced in a stolid Biedermeier setting: Mme. Schmidt and her divan seem of equal weight. His Italian landscapes—views of the Porta Angelica and the gardens of the Villa Borghese, in Rome—offer the pellucid light that found its loveliest expression in the work of his most famous student, Christen Købke (1810-48). Købke's numerous views of Frederiksborg Castle combine an exquisite precision of observation with a subdued melancholia, making it a suitable meditative site for a latter-day Hamlet.

Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 82nd St.—"The Decorative Arts of Frank Lloyd Wright." Furniture, ceramics, textiles, sculpture, architectural fragments, photographs, stained glass, metalwork, and drawings. There are concurrent shows of Wright works at the Museum of Modern Art and the Guggenheim Museum. . . . ¶ "Degas Landscapes." Seventy-five paintings, pastels, and monotypes, many of them on view for the first time since a solo Degas show in 1892. Through April 3. . . . ¶ Paintings and drawings from the late eighteenth century to the early twentieth by Caspar David Friedrich and Ferdinand Hodler, among others. . . . ¶ "The Golden Age of Danish Painting." . . . ¶ An exhibition of sixteenth-century Italian drawings by Caravaggio, Fra Bartolommeo, Bronzino, and many others. Through March 27. . . . ¶ A mini-retrospective of more than fifty portraits by Lucian Freud. Through March 13. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:15, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 8:45.)

Museum of Modern Art, 11 W. 53rd St.—"Frank Lloyd Wright: Architect." A retrospective, beginning with material from the eighteen-eighties, that includes some three hundred and fifty drawings, thirty scale models, six full-scale wall constructions, more than a hundred photographs, and architectural fragments. There are concurrent shows of Wright



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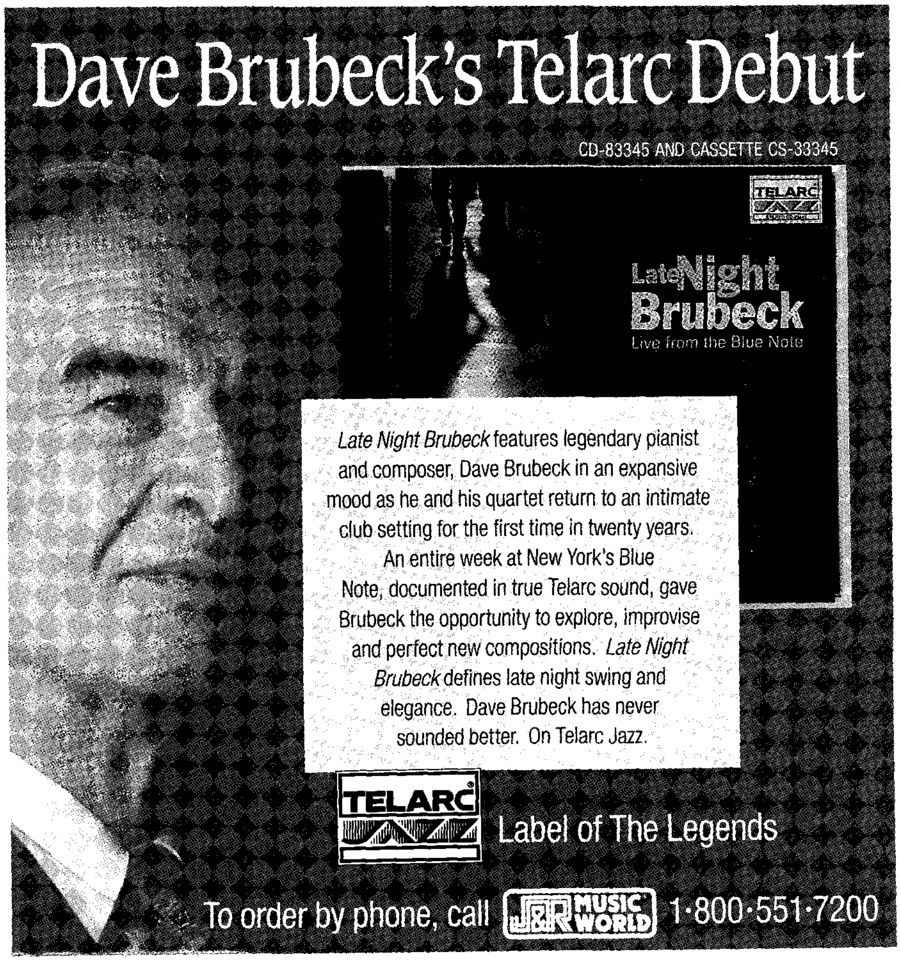
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works at the Metropolitan Museum and the Guggenheim Museum. . . . ¶ A section of a sixty-foot-diameter dome by Chuck Hoberman, which opens and closes in a fluid motion reminiscent of the expansion and contraction of the iris. Through April 12. . . . ¶ "Three Masters of the Bauhaus: Lyonel Feininger, Wassily Kandinsky, and Paul Klee" comprises roughly seventy-five prints and illustrated books from the museum's collection. . . . ¶ "Gesture and Pose: Twentieth-Century Photographs from the Collection." Through April 5. (Open Saturdays through Tuesdays, 11 to 6; Thursdays and Fridays, noon to 8:30.)

GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM, Fifth Ave. at 89th St.—"Women on the Edge: Twenty Photographers in Europe, 1919-39" includes work by Ilse Bing and Lucia Moholy. Opens March 11. . . . ¶ "Frank Lloyd Wright's Designs for the Guggenheim Museum." There are concurrent shows of Wright works at the Metropolitan Museum and the Museum of Modern Art. . . . ¶ "Robert Morris: The Mind/Body Problem," a retrospective exhibition, explores the intellectual underpinnings of this protean artist through a selection of his sculptures, drawings, and videos from the early sixties to the present. It may seem daunting in its variety and complexity, but this retrospective is a kind of crash course in American artistic sensibilities since Abstract Expressionism. In conjunction with the artist's show at the Guggenheim SoHo. (Open Sundays through Wednesdays, 10 to 6, and Fridays and Saturdays, 10 to 8.)

GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM SOHO, 575 Broadway—Nine installations with mirrors, by Robert Morris. Through April 4. . . . ¶ Eighty watercolors, made between 1911 and 1944, by the Russian artist Wassily Kandinsky (1866-1944). The earlier works, with their nervous, liquescent, quasi-figurative shapes, represent Kandinsky's art at its strongest. (Open Wednesdays through Sundays, 11 to 6, and Saturday evenings until 8.)

WHITNEY MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART, Madison Ave. at 75th St.—"Collection in Context: A Year from the Collection Circa 1952." Some seventy-five paintings, sculptures, prints, drawings, and photographs. . . . ¶ A dual exhibition devoted to photographers Walker Evans (1903-75) and Dan Graham (born 1942). Through March 20. (Open Wednesdays, and Fridays through Sundays, 11 to 6; Thursdays, 1 to 8.)

AMERICAN MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY, Central Park W. at 79th St.—Fine art ("Watson and the Shark," by John Singleton Copley), casts of fossils, and a sample of items that have been found in fishes' bellies—armor, hubcaps, a fur coat—are a few of the items in "Sharks! Fact and Fantasy." There's also a walk-through diorama with life-size models of seventeen species of shark. (Open daily, 10 to 5:45, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 8:45.)

ALTERNATIVE MUSEUM, 594 Broadway—"Komar & Melamid: People's Choice." After commissioning a poll of a thousand and one Americans about their preferences in art, these Russian artists have created a series of paintings that cater to the tastes reflected in the poll. The "ideal" painting is a landscape with water and historic figures; the "most undesirable" painting is a gold-and-orange abstract with sharp angles. (Tuesdays through Saturdays, 11 to 6.)

ASIA SOCIETY, Park Ave. at 70th St.—"Asia/America: Identities in Contemporary Asian American Art." The society's first exhibit of contemporary art includes paintings, sculptures, and photographs by twenty Asian-American artists, most of whom were born in Asia. (Open Tuesdays through Saturdays, 11 to 6, Thursday evenings until 8, and Sundays, noon to 5.)

JEWISH MUSEUM, Fifth Ave. at 92nd St.—"The Art of Memory: Holocaust Memorials in History." Two hundred photographs, videos, sculptural and architectural models, and designs of memorials examine how and why museums and monuments are shaping the public memory of the Holocaust. Opens March 13. (Open Mondays, Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Sundays, 11 to 5:45; Tuesdays, 11 to 8.)

Morgan Library, 29 E. 36th St.—"Gutenberg and the Genesis of Printing." At the center of this exhibit are the library's three Gutenberg Bibles (the single largest collection in the world) and a replica of the press on which they were printed. On Saturdays and Sundays at 1, there are demonstrations on the press. (Open Tuesdays through Fridays, 10:30 to 5; Saturdays, 10:30 to 6; Sundays, noon to 6.)

National Academy of Design, Fifth Ave. at 89th St.—The Academy's 169th Annual Exhibition, the oldest juried art exhibition in the United States, includes contemporary painting, sculpture, watercolors, prints, and architectural drawings. Through April 3. (Open Wednesdays through Sundays, noon to 5; Friday evenings until 8, with no admission charge after 5.)

New York Public Library, Fifth Ave. at 42nd St.—"Tracking the West: A. J. Russell Photographs of the Union Pacific Railroad" features work from the eighteen-sixties by the official photographer of the Union Pacific Railroad. Maps and illustrated books will also be on view. Opens March 12. (Mondays, Thursdays, Fridays, and Saturdays, 10 to 6, and Tuesdays and Wednesdays, 11 to 6.)

GALLERIES—UPTOWN

(Unless otherwise noted, galleries are open Tuesdays through Saturdays from around 10 or 11 to between 5 and 6. The following listings lead off with new shows.)

John Alexander—Paintings in richly colored layers, of such classical subjects as fruit, overflowing banquet tables, and wildlife. Opens March 10. Through April 2. (Marlborough, 40 W. 57th St. Open Mondays.)

Glenn Goldberg—Paintings on canvas and wood. Opens March 12. Through April 2. (Knoedler, 19 E. 70th St.)

Marc Lambrechts—A Belgian-born painter who combines geometric form with expressive gesture. Opens March 10. Through April 5. (De Nagy, 41 W. 57th St.)

Egon Schiele (1890-1918)—Works on paper of nudes, by this renowned member of the Vienna Secession. Opens March 10. Through April 16. (Gagosian, 980 Madison Ave., at 76th St.)

"Portraits"—More than sixty portraits, ranging from the mid-eighteenth century to the mid-twentieth, by Benjamin West, Childe Hassam, Philip Guston, and others. Opens March 15. Through June 11. (IBM Gallery of Science and Art, Madison Ave. at 56th St.)

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William Bailey—A mini-retrospective of paintings and works on paper from 1964 to 1994. Like Giorgio Morandi before him, Bailey remains obsessively faithful to the still-life. Usually restricting himself to subdued colors and matte finishes, the artist depicts bowls and other household objects on shelves or tables; this simple setup allows for a wide range of variations on a theme. His paintings balance prosaic subjects with extraordinary finesse of execution. The reason for showing such apparently conventional realist work at a gallery well known for its commitment to hard-edged and color-field abstraction is that Bailey, no less than his abstractionist peers, is devoted to a cool, passive surface. Through April 9. (Emmerich, 41 E. 57th St.)

Mark Rothko (1903-70)—"The Last Paintings," a show of twelve works from 1969 that are far less absolute and despairing in temper than the dour black paintings of the same period, which were taken as Rothko's final statement (as well as an artistic prelude to his suicide, in 1970). Rothko explores the varying tonalities of ochre, umber, and pale shades of pink, blue, and gray, creating a mood that is certainly ambiguous, perhaps ambivalent. But these last paintings are a far cry from the terminal gloom hitherto associated with this artist's last works. Through March 19. (Pace, 32 E. 57th St.)

Idelle Weber—Inspired by experiments with monotypes (some lovely, tiny examples of which are on display), Weber has produced a series of oil paintings of windswept landscapes. With her versatile brushstrokes—moving from bold swipes to velvety tendrils in the same work—and monochromatic color scheme, she departs from her previous Pop and Photo-Realist incarnations. Each moody, Turneresque view of horizon, marsh, and sky is beautifully atmospheric, from the pearl-gray serenity of a work like "Cold Was the Night" to the latent anger in "Hide the Bride." Through April 2. (Schmidt Bingham, 41 E. 57th St.)

Enzo Cucchi—A sculpture and a number of drawings, conceived as a single work, by a member of the Italian wing of the neo-expressionists. Through March 26. (Blum Helman, 20 W. 57th St.)

Janet Fish—Brilliant-colored, light-filled still-lifes and landscapes. Through April 2. (Borgenicht, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St.)

Gabriel Laderman—Paintings of studio nudes and scenes of domestic torment. Through March 26. (Tatistcheff, 50 W. 57th St.)

Louisa Matthiasdottir—Landscapes, still-lifes, and self-portraits by an artist who was born in Iceland in 1917 and has been living in New York since 1941. Through April 12. (Salander-O'Reilly, 20 E. 79th St. Open Mondays.)

Paul Rickert / David Joel—Paintings of coastal Maine juxtaposed with paintings of the industrial Northeast. / Large paintings of figures surrounded by symbolic elements. Through March 26. (Fischbach, 24 W. 57th St.)

Harry Roseman—A series of drawings and etchings of interwoven lines. Through March 26. (Davis & Langdale, 231 E. 60th St.)

Charles Seliger—Small-scale organic abstractions done in the past several years. Through April 2. (Rosenfeld, 24 W. 57th St.)

Kenneth Snelson—Sculptures, from 1959 to 1993, parts of which are held in place by wires and appear to be suspended in mid-air. Through April 9. (Davidson, 41 E. 57th St. Open Mondays.)

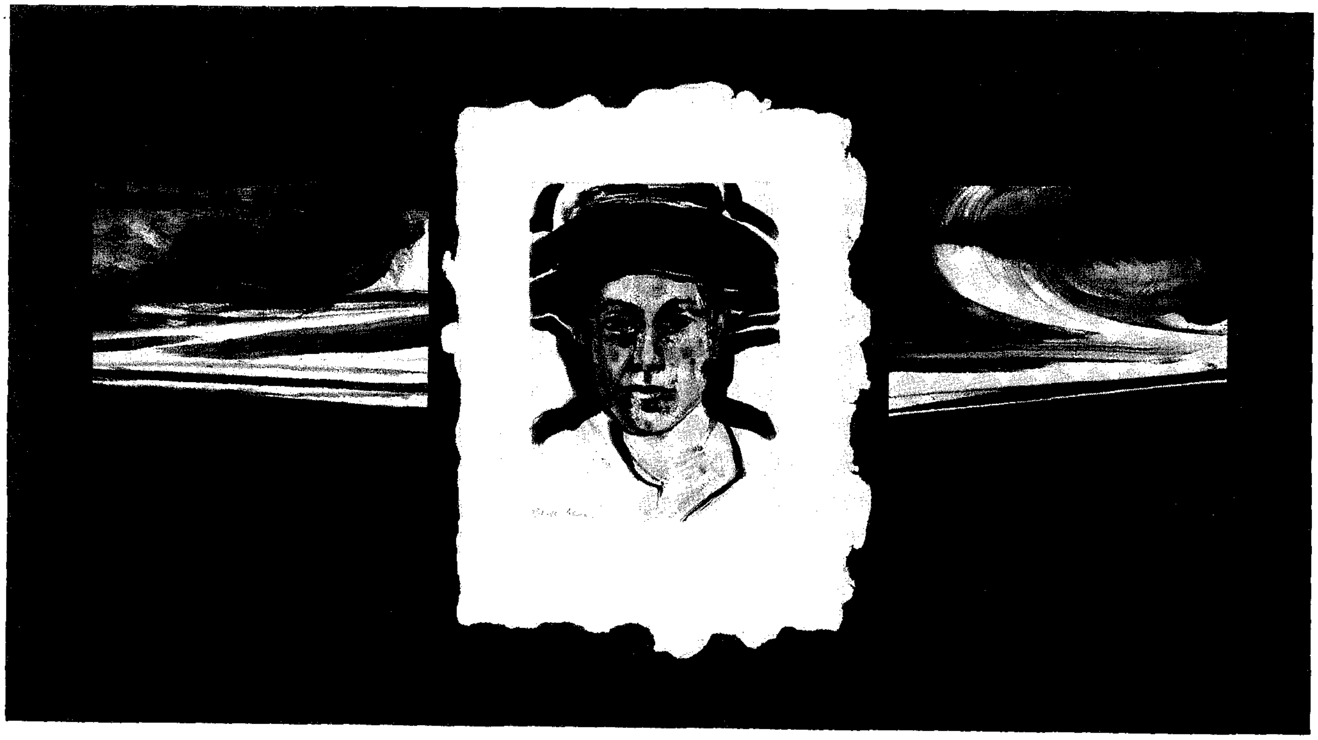
Joan Snyder—Works made with paper in a show examining the artist's appreciation of this medium as a source of structure, texture, and subject matter. Through April 16. (Hirschl & Adler Modern, 21 E. 70th St.)

William Tucker—Abstract plaster and bronze sculptures. Through April 2. (McKee, 745 Fifth Ave., at 57th St.)

GALLERIES—DOWNTOWN

Ronald Searle—Original drawings and watercolors. Opens March 10. Through May 14. (Heineman, 594 Broadway.)

Rebecca Smith—Plaster sculptures of wing shapes and imperfect spheres. Opens March 10. Through April 2. (Ledisflam, 130 Prince St.)



Self-portrait by Idelle Weber (Schmidt Bingham).

ART—Cont'd

"The Garden of Sculptural Delights"—An environmental installation by nine artists, inspired by the well-known Hieronymus Bosch painting. Opens March 12. Through April 23. (Exit Art, 548 Broadway.)

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Richard Bosman—"Fragments," small-scale paintings and sculptures of hands and feet. Through March 25. (Brooke Alexander, 59 Wooster St.)

Chris Burden—"America's Darker Moments," a series of tiny cast-tin figures grouped to represent such scenes as the Kennedy assassination and the Kent State uprising; "L.A.P.D. Uniform," an edition of thirty overscale uniforms; and "Small Guns," a series of incongruously paired objects. Through March 26. (Gagosian, 136 Wooster St.)

Geneviève Cadieux—Three works using large-scale cibachromes and body casting. Through April 30. (Kent, 67 Prince St. Closed Mondays and Tuesdays.)

Leonardo Drew—Large-scale sculptures made of metal, cotton, rust, and rope—materials intended to evoke African-American history. Through April 9. (Toll, 146 Greene St.)

Lester Johnson—Near-monochromatic oils from the sixties, when Johnson kept a studio on the Bowery; painted over and over, the final versions coalesce into elusive figures. Through April 2. (Thorp, 103 Prince St.)

Barbara Kruger—Photographs overlaid with text concerning social issues. Through April 30. (Boone, 417 West Broadway.)

Ronnie Landfield—Paintings with geometric and expressionistic forms. Through April 9. (Stephen Rosenberg, 115 Wooster St.)

John Moore—Abstract paintings with splashes and circles of color. Through March 26. (M-13, at 72 Greene St.)

Adrian Piper—Works from 1968 to 1970 called "information pages," which include text and photographs. Through March 26. (Cooper, 155 Wooster St.)

Joseph Raffael—Large-scale watercolors based on nature, in a show focussing on two monumental diptychs of lily pads. Through April 13. (Hoffman, 429 West Broadway.)

Hughie Lee-Smith—Watercolors of figures in landscapes. Through April 5. (Kelly, 591 Broadway.)

William Steiger—Paintings relating to the artist's monumental industrial structures, plus one of a Ferris wheel. Through March 26. (Condeso/Lawler, 524 Broadway.)

Michelle Stuart—Sculptures recalling ritual objects, grouped on wax-slab tables. Through April 2. (Fawbush, 76 Grand St.)

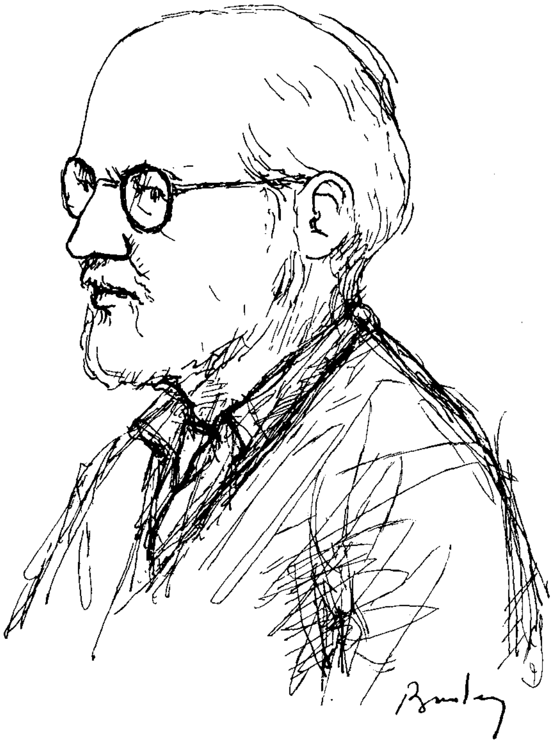
Beth Ames Swartz—Spiritual, cosmological paintings. Through March 19. (Donahue, 560 Broadway.)

John Wesley—Paintings of pairs of nude women. Through March 26. (Freire, 130 Prince St.)

ANTIQUES AND AUCTIONS

From the U.S.S.R.—A collection of posters, dating from 1917 to 1932, aimed at promoting Russian films and Socialist goals, in a first-of-its-kind auction at Sotheby's, on March 10 at 10:15 and 2. In the film category is an anonymous poster design for Sergei Eisenstein's 1925 "The Battleship Potemkin" (estimate: $2,000-$3,000). The Socialist-propaganda group ranges from a rather heavy-handed 1931 poster, "We Will Be Ready for Any Repercussions from the Military Attack on the U.S.S.R." (estimate: $10,000-$14,000), to a lot consisting of five promotional designs (estimate: $1,200-$1,800). (York Ave. at 72nd St. For further information, call 606-7176.)

Paper Chase—Prints, posters, watercolors, drawings, photographs, illustrated books, and architectural designs from ninety-five galleries and private dealers will be available at the sixth annual "Works on Paper" event. Included are an 1896 Toulouse-Lautrec lithograph titled "Débauche" ($18,000), Irving Penn's 1978 photograph "3 Russian Women with Bread, Morocco" ($25,000), and a 1980 Roy Lichtenstein woodcut called "The Prints" ($9,500). (7th Regiment Armory, Park Ave. at 66th St. March 11, from 11 to 9; March 12, from 11 to 8; and March 13, from 11 to 7. Tickets are available at the door on the days of the show.)



Self-portrait by William Bailey (Emmerich).

PHOTOGRAPHY

Dieter Appelt—The first solo exhibition in New York by this German photographer and sculptor. Through April 30. (Sander, 19 E. 76th St.)

Arthur Elgort—"Models Manual," a behind-the-scenes look at the world of mega-waifs and other lanky goddesses. Through May 7. (Staley-Wise, 560 Broadway.)

Walker Evans (1903-75)—Nine handgravures of the Brooklyn Bridge (made by Jon Goodman from Evans' negatives), which were chosen by Hart Crane to illustrate "The Bridge." Through April 16. (Zabriskie, 724 Fifth Ave.)

Ruth Orkin (1921-85)—Black-and-white images by this photographer best known for her celebrity portraits. Through April 16. (Witkin, 415 West Broadway.)

Irving Penn—An exhibition of thirty photographs of New York, all selected by Penn, spanning forty-six years. Through April 16. (Pace/MacGill, 32 E. 57th St.)

Susan Rankaitis—Photographs treated with paint, chemical washes, and other materials. Through March 12. (Mann, 42 E. 76th St.)

International Center of Photography Midtown, Sixth Ave. at 43rd St.—"Cycles," a retrospective of work by Judy Dater. Through April 3. (Open daily, except Mondays, 11 to 6, and Tuesday evenings until 8.)

(See the museum listings for photography exhibitions at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Museum of Modern Art, and the Whitney Museum of American Art.)

CLASSICAL MUSIC

Transmitting Tango

JUST as the mazurka leapt from the souls of the Poles and the czardas from the hearts of the Hungarians, so the tango emerged in the late nineteenth century from the back-alley bordellos and dance halls of Buenos Aires to become the sultry musical signature of the Argentines. In the nineteen-thirties, Argentine radio audiences thrilled to the broadcasts of an elusive pianist named Juancho ("Big John," rumored to be handsome, but never seen in person), whose complex renditions unleashed all of the tango's macho passion. Years later, it came to light that Juancho was in fact a woman—Arminda Canteros—and that she had been broadcasting under five different names, doing everything from comedy routines and soap operas to straitlaced chamber music.

After decades of classical concertizing under her own name, Canteros settled in New York in 1970. Since then she has devoted most of her energies to teaching, passing along the subtle philosophy of touch and legato that she learned long ago from her distinguished teachers, Ruwin Erlich and Walter Gieseking. But on rare occasions this tiny, gentle octogenarian still appears onstage to play her beloved tangos with a fervor that few can approach. When she performs on March 11, in the concert hall of the Greenwich House Music School, her program will comprise both classic tangos of the *guardia vieja* (the balmy pre-Peronist era of the early twentieth century) and more recent examples of the genre, including several by the late Astor Piazzolla. All of them will certainly benefit from her impressive technique (which remains intact) and her powerfully authentic spirit.

(The box-office number for the Metropolitan Opera House is 362-6000; for Avery Fisher Hall, 875-5030; for Carnegie Hall and Weill Recital Hall, 247-7800; for the Kaye Playhouse, Hunter College, Park Ave. at 68th St., 772-4448; for Merkin Concert Hall, 129 W. 67th St., 362-8719; for the Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 83rd St., 570-3949; and for the 92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St., 996-1100.)

OPERA

Metropolitan Opera—**STIFFELIO,** with Sharon Sweet, Giorgio Lamberti, Vladimir Chernov, and Jeffrey Wells; conducted by James Levine. (March 9 and March 12 at 8.) . . . **LA FILLE DU RÉGIMENT,** with Harolyn Blackwell, Rosalind Elias, Frank Lopardo, and Bruno Praticò; Edoardo Müller. (March 10 at 8.) . . . **ADRIANA LECOUVREUR,** with Mirella Freni, Stefania Toczyska, Luis Lima, and Sherrill Milnes; Roberto Abbado. (March 11 and March 14 at 8.) . . . **DIALOGUES OF THE CARMELITES,** sung in English, with Dawn Upshaw, Teresa Stratas, Heidi Grant Murphy, Helga Dernesch, and Florence Quivar; Kent Nagano. (March 12 at 1:30.) . . . **IL BARBIERE DI SIVIGLIA,** with Susanne Mentzer, Stanford Olsen, Vladimir Chernov, Enzo Dara, and Nicolai Ghiaurov; Carlo Rizzi. (March 15 at 8.) (Metropolitan Opera House.)

Hsin-Chuan Taiwanese Opera Troupe—Featuring Liao Chiung-chih in stagings of classic folk-opera scenes. (Taipei Theatre, 1221 Sixth Ave., at 48th St. 373-1850. March 10-12 at 7:30 and March 13 at 2.)

"U.S. Highball"—A musical account of a hobo trip by Harry Partch, who once rode the rails himself; fully staged, and featuring members of Newband (playing on numerous instruments of Partch's invention). Partch's "Castor and Pollux" and "Eleven Instrusions" are also on the bill. (St. Ann's Church, 157 Montague St., Brooklyn. 1-718 858-2424. March 11-12 at 8.)

Choral Symphony Society Cantata Singers—David Labovitz directs a concert version of Mozart's "Idomeneo." (Christ and St. Stephen's Church, 120 W. 69th St. March 13 at 2. Admission by contribution.)

Opera Orchestra of New York—Eve Queler conducts a concert version of Donizetti's "Catarina Cornaro," featuring soprano Aprile Millo, tenor Luca Canonici, baritone Renato Bruson, and bass Carlo Colombara. (Carnegie Hall. March 13 at 8.)

ORCHESTRAS AND CHORUSES

New York Philharmonic—Herbert Blomstedt conducts Chopin's Piano Concerto No. 2 (with Bella Davidovich) and Nielsen's Symphony No. 4 (the "Inextinguishable"). (Avery Fisher Hall. March 10 and March 12 at 8, and March 11 at 2.)

Oratorio Society of New York—Lyndon Woodside directs the chorus and orchestra in Mendelssohn's "Elijah," with soprano Ruth Golden, mezzo-soprano Gwenneth Bean, tenor David Britton, and (in the title role) baritone Kurt Ollmann. (Carnegie Hall. March 9 at 8.)

L'Orchestre de Paris—Semyon Bychkov conducts Beethoven's Symphony No. 5 and Shostakovich's Symphony No. 5. (Carnegie Hall. March 10 at 8.)

American Symphony Orchestra—Leon Botstein conducts music exemplifying German Romanticism: Brahms' "Nänie" and Beethoven's cantata "Calm Sea and Prosperous Voyage" (both with the Pro Arte Chorale), Mendelssohn's "Calm Sea and Prosperous Voyage Overture," Joachim Raff's "Italian Suite," and Reger's "Four Tone Poems after Arnold Böcklin." (Avery Fisher Hall. March 11 at 7:30.)

Children's Orchestra Society—Michael Dudap conducts an ensemble of accomplished preteen and teen-age musicians in Mendelssohn's "Hebrides" Overture, Respighi's "Rossiniana," and two works featuring alumnus cellist Yo-Yo Ma: Tchaikovsky's "Variations on a Rococo Theme" and the second movement of Brahms' Double Concerto. It's a family affair: the conductor is married to the cellist's sister, who happens to be the executive director of the group, which was founded in 1962 by their father. (Alice Tully Hall. 875-5050. March 11 at 7:30. A benefit concert.)

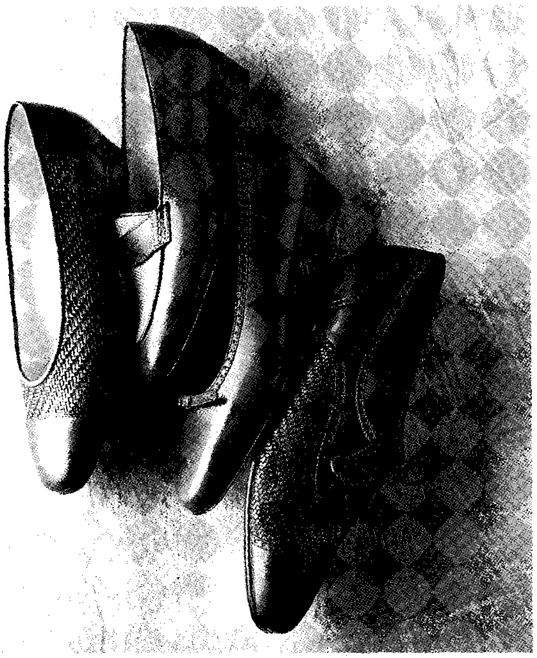
New York Pops—Skitch Henderson leads music by such Tin Pan Alley denizens as George M. Cohan and Irving Berlin. (Carnegie Hall. March 11 at 8.)

New York Choral Society—John Daly Goodwin directs Joelle Wallach's "Toward a Time of Renewal" and Te Deums by Haydn and Berlioz; with the American Boy Choir and various soloists. (Carnegie Hall. March 12 at 8.)

New Amsterdam Singers—Clara Longstreth directs Schütz' "Musicalische Exequien," works by Brahms and Bruch, and (to inject a little levity) Paul Alan Levi's setting of Mark Twain's "The Awful German Language." (St. Peter's Church, Lexington Ave. at 54th St. March 12 at 8. Tickets at the door on the night of the concert.)

Dessoff Choirs—Amy Kaiser directs works by Stravinsky (his Mass), John Tavener, Górecki, Kodály, and others. (Merkin Concert Hall. March 12 at 8.)

New York Chamber Symphony—Dmitry Sitkovetsky conducts Bach's Ricercar from "A Musical Offering," Respighi's concerto arrangement of Bach's E-Minor Violin Sonata (in



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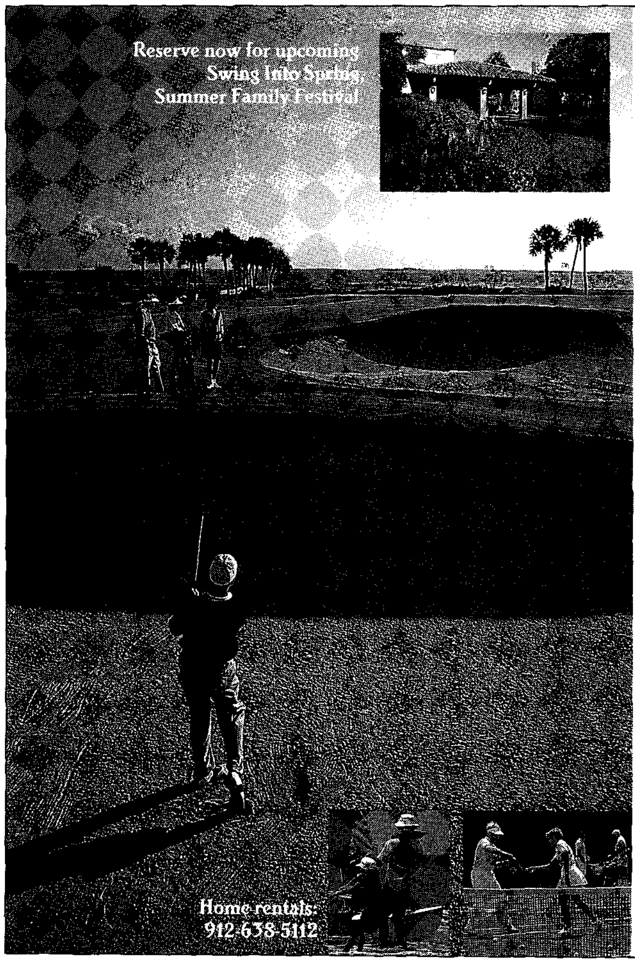

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MUSIC—Cont'd

which the conductor will double as soloist), the third suite of Respighi's "Ancient Airs and Dances," and Vivaldi's E-Minor Bassoon Concerto (featuring Kim Walker). (92nd Street Y. March 12 at 8.)

Orchestre National de France—Charles Dutoit conducts Berlioz' "Le Corsaire" Overture, Beethoven's Violin Concerto (with Shlomo Mintz), and Roussel's "Bacchus et Ariane" ballet score. (Avery Fisher Hall. March 13 at 3.)

Musica Viva—Walter Klauss directs his chorus and orchestra in Vaughan Williams' "Fantasia on the 'Old 104' Psalm Tune," the première of Raoul Pleskow's "Six Fancies on Pictures of Klee," and a work by Zimbabwean composer Paul Renan; featuring Zimbabwean pianist Jeanette Micklem and mbira player Dumisani Maraire. Also on the program is the "Misa Luba," composed in the nineteen-fifties by members of a Roman Catholic parish in the Congo. (All Souls Unitarian Church, Lexington Ave. at 80th St. 535-5530. March 13 at 7.)

Academy of Ancient Music—Christopher Hogwood conducts the period-instrument orchestra in a Vivaldi sinfonia, oboe concerto (featuring Frank de Bruine), and violin concerto (with Simon Standage); Telemann's "Don Quixote" Suite; and a sonata à cinque by Handel. (Avery Fisher Hall. March 13 at 7:30.)

St. Louis Symphony—Leonard Slatkin conducts the New York première of a new performing version (by Remo Mazzetti) of Mahler's Tenth Symphony. (Carnegie Hall. March 15 at 8.)

RECITALS

Hagen String Quartet—Performing quartets by Mozart (in F Major, K. 590), Lutoslawski, and Schubert (the "Death and the Maiden"). (92nd Street Y. March 9 at 8.)

Brentano String Quartet—The foursome plays Haydn's D-Major Quartet (Op. 71, No. 2) and the première of a work by Deborah Drattell; pianist Susan Kagan performs variations by Beethoven's pupil, the Archduke Rudolph, and assists in Dvořák's "Dumky" Trio. (Kaye Playhouse. March 9 at 8.)

Festival Chamber Music Society—Performing Mozart's Horn Quintet, Françaix's Octet for strings and winds, and Dvořák's G-Major String Quintet (Op. 77). (Merkin Concert Hall. March 9 at 8.)

Bargemusic—Pianist Joseph Villa performs Liszt's Ballade No. 2; violinist Nai-Yuan Hu and cellist Ronald Thomas join him for piano trios by Mozart (in C Major, K. 548) and Arensky (in D Minor). (Fulton Ferry Landing, Brooklyn. 1-718 624-4061. March 10 at 7:30 and March 13 at 4.)

John Williams—The beginning of a three-concert survey of classical-guitar literature. March 10 at 8: Works by Vivaldi, Bach, Scarlatti, and Sylvius Leopold Weiss. . . . ¶ March 15 at 8: Twentieth-century works by Peter Sculthorpe, Leo Brouwer, Goffredo Petrassi, and others. (92nd Street Y.)

Beethoven Trio Wien—An Austrian ensemble, performing Mendelssohn's C-Minor Piano Trio, Beethoven's Symphony No. 2 (in his own trio arrangement), and a new work by Beat Furrer. (Miller Theatre, Columbia University, Broadway at 116th St. 854-7799. March 10 at 8.)

Virtuosi Quintet—The woodwind quintet performs music by Franz Danzi, Ligeti, Françaix, and Joseph Jongen (his Rhapsodie for Winds and Piano, with the assistance of John van Buskirk). (Weill Recital Hall. March 10 at 8.)

Musicians from Marlboro—Performing Mozart's Horn Quintet (K. 407), Webern's Piano Quintet, Beethoven's C-Major Piano Quartet (WoO 36, No. 1), and Brahms' G-Major String Quintet. (Metropolitan Museum. March 10 at 8.)

Paul Sperry—The tenor (and pianist John Musto) perform three song cycles: Beethoven's "An die Ferne Geliebte," Schumann's "Dichterliebe," and Louise Talma's "Infanta Marina." (Kaye Playhouse. March 10 at 8.)

Arminda Canteros—The Argentine pianist performs classic and modern tangos. (Greenwich House Music School, 46 Barrow St. 242-4770. March 11 at 8.)

Ysaÿe String Quartet—The French foursome plays quartets by Haydn (in G Minor, Op. 74, No. 3), Pascal Dusapin (the New York première of his Third), and Debussy. (Metropolitan Museum. March 11 at 8.)

Caroline Hartig—Clarinettist, in a program that includes Weber's B-Flat-Major Quintet, Lutoslawski's "Dance Preludes," and a new work by Libby Larsen; with pianist Robert Palmer and the Chester String Quartet. (Weill Recital Hall. March 11 at 8.)

Guarneri Quartet—Performing string quartets by Juan Crisóstomo Arriaga (his First) and Bartók (his Third), as well as Dvořák's Piano Quintet (with Seymour Lipkin). (Metropolitan Museum. March 12 at 8.)

Pamela Frank and Claude Frank—The violinist and pianist—daughter and father—perform Beethoven's Sonatas Op. 12, Op. 30, and Op. 96. (Whitman Hall, Brooklyn Center for the Performing Arts, Brooklyn College. 1-718 951-4500. March 12 at 8.)

Cosmopolitan Chamber Players—Harpsichordist Ilan Rechtman is featured in Bach's F-Minor Keyboard Concerto and Fifth 'Brandenburg' Concerto. (Le Refuge Inn, 620 City Island Ave., City Island, the Bronx. March 13 at 11 A.M. Admission is free, but call 1-718 885-2478 to reserve a seat.)

Stephanie Brown—The pianist's program includes sonatas by Mozart, Beethoven (the "Appassionata"), and Schubert (in A Minor, D. 784). (New School, 66 W. 12th St. 229-5689. March 13 at 2.)

Florence Gould Hall Chamber Players—Presenting instrumental and vocal chamber works by Berlioz, Dukas, Koechlin, Messiaen, and others. (Florence Gould Hall, 55 E. 59th St. 355-6160. March 13 at 3.)

Marie-Claire Alain—The French organist performs works by her father (Albert Alain) and brother (Jehan Alain), as well as by Bach and Charles Tournemire. (Church of the Holy Trinity, 316 E. 88th St. March 13 at 5. Tickets at the door on the day of the concert.)

Theatre of Voices—An early-music vocal quintet (soprano Judith Nelson, countertenor Drew Minter, tenors Paul Elliott and Alan Bennett, and baritone Paul Hillier) performs medieval and Renaissance music, from twelfth-century organum to motets by Byrd. (Frick Collection, 1 E. 70th St. 288-0700. March 13 at 5.)

Iris Regev and Ilan Rechtman—The wife-and-husband cello-and-piano team performs Beethoven's Third Cello Sonata, Chopin's "Introduction and Polonaise Brillante," and a work by Mr. Rechtman. (Hotel Wales, Madison Ave. at 92nd St. March 13 at 6 and 8. Admission is free, but call 876-6000 to reserve a seat.)

Bang on a Can All-Stars—Some of the avant-garde festival's regulars jam it up in a concert of works by Allison Cameron, Michael Gordon, Eleanor Hovda, Tom Johnson, David Lang, Frederic Rzewski, Mary Wright, and Evan Ziporyn. (Walter Reade Theatre, 165 W. 65th St., plaza level. March 14 at 7:30. For information about tickets, call 875-5050.)

Ljuba Kazarnovskaya—Soprano, performing Russian songs by Rimsky-Korsakov, Tchaikovsky, Rachmaninoff, and others. (Kaye Playhouse. March 14 at 8.)

Out of the Vault—Works by Mozart (his G-Major Duo for Violin and Viola, K. 423), Boccherini (his A-Minor Piano Quintet), and Mendelssohn (his A-Major String Quartet and Canon for Two Violas), the manuscripts of which are owned by the Morgan Library, and which will be displayed in the foyer; with violinists Laurie Smukler and Carmit Zori, violists Ira Weller and Michael Tree, cellist Carter Brey, and fortepianist Andrew Willis. (Morgan Library, 29 E. 36th St. 685-0008, ext. 347. March 15 at 6:15.)

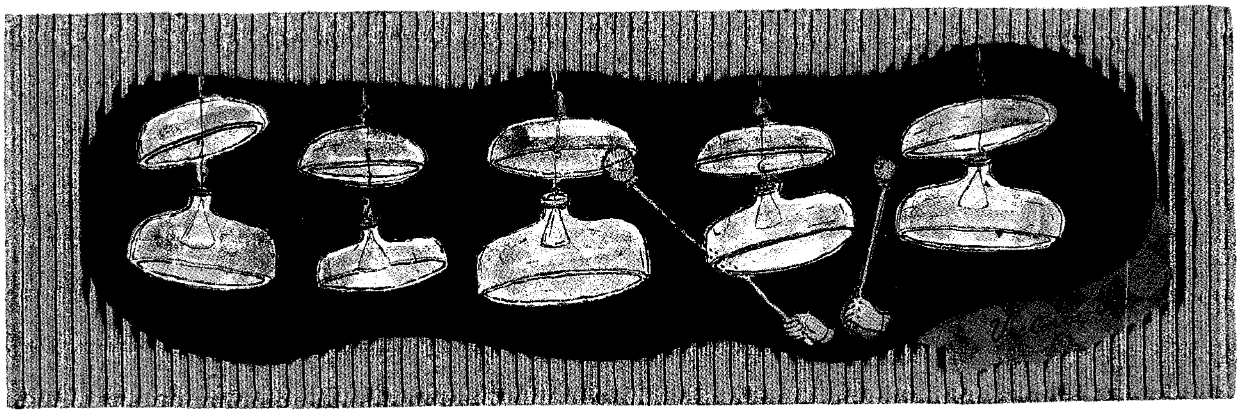
Meridian String Quartet—Performing a casual concert of Copland's "Two Pieces for String Quartet" (1928) and "Movement for String Quartet" (1988). (Turtle Bay Music School, 244 E. 52nd St. 753-8811. March 15 at 7:30.)

St. Luke's Chamber Ensemble—Presenting an all-Vivaldi program, including his D-Minor Concerto Grosso (Op. 3, No. 11), the last of the "Four Seasons" ("Winter," featuring violinist Eriko Sato), and a Flautino Concerto (played on piccolo by Elizabeth Mann). (Merkin Concert Hall. March 15 at 8.)

Ex Umbris—The early-music group performs works by Machaut, Landini, and other fourteenth-century masters (including several exponents of the experimental *ars subtilior* style). (Christ and St. Stephen's Church, 120 W. 69th St. March 15 at 8. Tickets at the door on the night of the concert.)

New York Consort of Viols—Performing an Italian Baroque program. (Wallace Hall, Church of St. Ignatius Loyola, Park Ave. at 84th St. March 15 at 8. For information about tickets, call 580-9787.)

S.E.M. Ensemble—Petr Kotik conducts works by David First and Jerry Hunt. (Paula Cooper gallery, 155 Wooster St. March 15 at 8. For information about tickets, call 1-718 488-7659.)



Harry Partch's "U.S. Highball," played on Partch-invented instruments, at St. Ann's.

VICTORIA ROBERTS

ABOVE AND BEYOND

Going Back—"Distinct Traditions: Myths and Voices of the Many Americas" will feature Agha Shahid Ali, Toi Derricotte, Cecilia Vicuña, and Ray Young Bear reading and discussing a selection of their poems concerning mythology. (Poetry Society of America, 15 Gramercy Park S. March 11 at 7. Tickets at the door on the night of the reading.)

Grand Central Green—With more than a dozen snowstorms under their belts, New Yorkers look for spring anywhere they can find it. Starting on March 14, the Main Waiting Room at Grand Central Terminal hosts a spring market, featuring wicker baskets, Easter bonnets, plants, and garden furniture—and the promise of a picnic in your future. (Mondays through Saturdays, from 10 to 7. Through April 23.)

Make It So—The Spring Crafts Market will include stained glass, paper, kaleidoscopes, and soft-sculpture dolls, by more than a hundred and twenty exhibitors. (Ferris Booth Hall, Columbia University, Broadway at 115th St. March 11, from 2 to 7, and March 12-13, from 11 to 6. Through March 20. Tickets at the door on the days of the show.) . . . ¶ The New York Craft Show will feature clothing, jewelry, home furnishings, and furniture of modern design. (P.S. 234, 292 Greenwich St., at Chambers St. March 11, from 6 to 9, March 12, from 11 to 6, and March 13, from noon to 5. Tickets at the door on the days of the show.)

Old Flames—The New York City Fire Museum presents an exhibit of antique and modern torches, lanterns, and searchlights, all used to illuminate fires. The museum is in a renovated 1904 firehouse and features firetrucks, helmets, hoses, and pails. (278 Spring St. Open Tuesdays through Saturdays, from 10 to 4. Admission by contribution.)

ArtSpeak—A trio of evenings that feature artists talking about their work. March 10 at 6:15: Felix Gonzalez-Torres. (Whitney Museum of American Art, Madison at 75th St. 606-0211.) . . . ¶ March 11 at 6:30: Chuck Hoberman. (Museum of Modern Art, 11 W. 53rd St. Tickets at the door on the evening of the talk.) . . . ¶ March 15 at 6:30: Y. David Chung, Marlon Fuentes, Jin Soo Kim, Hung Liu, and Masami Teraoka, all of whose work is on exhibit. (Asia Society, 725 Park Ave., at 70th St. 517-2742.)

Hit the Road Jack—He'd be seventy-two years old this year, but Jack Kerouac is locked in time as a youthful rebel on the road. To celebrate his birthday, Beatrix Books & Pix will hold its annual reading, from Kerouac's fourteen novels and three books of poetry, on March 12 at 8. (33-18 Broadway, Astoria. No tickets necessary. To participate, call 1-718 204-5775.)

Post-Post-Feminism—To celebrate the publications of "Where We Stand," a collection of essays by women poets, and of the updated anthology of poems by women "No More Masks!," Cheryl Clarke, Cynthia Macdonald, and others will participate in a panel discussion and reading. March 10 at 7: "Where We Stand." (Poets House, 72 Spring St. No tickets necessary.) . . . ¶ March 11 at 7: "No More Masks!" (City University Graduate Center, room 1700, 33 W. 42nd St. Admission by contribution.)

Readings—March 12 at 7:30: Molly Peacock, Goran Tomčić, Charles Wright, and others will read from their own poetry, in conjunction with the New York Kunsthalle gallery's "Witnesses of Existence" show, which is inspired by installations exhibited in Sarajevo's Obala gallery. (210 E. 5th St. Tickets at the door on the night of the reading.) . . . ¶ March 13 at 7:30: Lars Eighner will read from and discuss his memoir "Travels with Lizbeth." (Shakespeare & Co., 2259 Broadway, at 81st St. No tickets necessary.) . . . ¶ March 14 at 8: Alice McDermott and John McGahern will read from their own work. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 996-1100.)

Talks—March 10 at 6:30: A panel discussion, "In Your Face: The Decline of Civility in Urban Life," with Richard Brookhiser, William Grimes, Michael Gross, and others. (Great Hall, Cooper Union, Third Ave. at 7th St. Tickets at the door on the night of the discussion.) . . . ¶ March 12 at 10:30: Eugenie Clark will talk about swimming with and studying sharks. (American Museum of Natural History, Central Park W. at 79th St. Tickets at the door on the day of the talk.)

Walks & Tours—March 12 at 1: The Greenwich Village Society for Historic Preservation will tour the East Village. For more information, call 924-3895. . . . ¶ March 12 at 1: Radical Walking Tours kicks off its spring season with a tour of Chelsea. For more information, call 1-718 492-0069. . . . ¶ March 13 at 2: The Urban Park Rangers are for the birds. And while the trees are still bare, they'll show you how easy it is to spot our feathered friends. (Loeb Boathouse, mid-Central Park at 74th St. No tickets necessary.)

SPORTS

HOME TEAMS

Knicks—Vs. the Cleveland Cavaliers, March 12 at 8:30. . . . ¶ Vs. the Indiana Pacers, March 15 at 7:30.

Nets—Vs. the Indiana Pacers, March 11. . . . ¶ Vs. the Charlotte Hornets, March 12. (Game time, 7:30.)

Rangers—Away until March 16, when they'll face the Hartford Whalers.

Islanders—Vs. the Devils, March 15 at 7:40.

Devils—Vs. the Hartford Whalers, March 10 at 7:35. . . . ¶ Vs. the Boston Bruins, March 12 at 1:35. . . . ¶ Vs. the Dallas Stars, March 13 at 5:05.

(The Knicks play at Madison Square Garden, 465-6000; the Nets and the Devils at the Meadowlands Arena, 1-201 935-3900; and the Islanders at the Nassau Coliseum, 1-516 794-9300.)

FOR KIDS

(A list of activities for children and their parents or other adults.)

Barney Live—The purple dinosaur's sold-out Radio City engagement. (Sixth Ave. at 50th St. 247-4777. Through March 13.)

"Happy Concerts for Young People"—The Little Orchestra Society's series for six-to-twelve-year-olds stages "Hansel and Gretel," with soprano Beverly Hoch and mezzo-soprano Cynthia Rose. Dino Anagnost is the conductor. (Avery Fisher Hall. 875-5030. March 12 at 11 and 1.)

Theatrics—In the play "If We Only Had a Cat!" two residents of a nursing home attempt to sneak in a cat. (Black Box Theatre, New York University, 32 Washington Pl. 998-5869. March 11 at 7:30 and March 12 at 2.) . . . ¶ The Children's Storybook Theatre offers a version of "Beauty and the Beast." (Tribeca Performing Arts Center, 199 Chambers St. 346-8510. March 12 at 1:30.) . . . ¶ The current bill of fare for the Little People's Theatre Company: "Sleeping Beauty" (at 1:30) and "Cinderella" (at 3), on Saturdays and Sundays. (Courtyard Playhouse, 39 Grove St. 765-9540.)

Maple Sugar Sunday and Pioneer Day—Candy-making (and eating), tree tapping, wood sculpting, and listening to stories and folk-singing are just a few of the activities in which you can indulge at the New York Botanical Garden on March 13, from 10 to 4. (Bronx Park. 1-718 817-8700.)

Ancient Vibrations—A twelve-member ensemble presents a program of Jamaican music and dance, which includes plenty o' audience participation, mon. (Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. 864-5400. March 13 at 3.)

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THE MOVIES

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EAST SIDE

Angelika Film Center, 18 W. Houston St. (995-2000)

Theatre 1: "The Piano" (†).

Theatre 2: "The Snapper" (directed by Stephen Frears), with Colm Meaney.

Theatre 3: "The Cement Garden" (Andrew Birkin).

Theatre 4: "Savage Nights" (†).

Theatre 5: "Sirens" (John Duigan).

Theatre 6: "Naked" (†).

Little Theatre, Public Theatre, 425 Lafayette St. (598-7171)

Through March 10: "Billy the Kid" (1930, King Vidor); and "Northwest Passage" (1940, Vidor), with Spencer Tracy.

March 11-13: "The Fountainhead" (1949, King Vidor), with Gary Cooper, Patricia Neal, and Raymond Massey; and "Lightning Strikes Twice" (1951, Vidor), with Ruth Roman and Richard Todd.

March 14: Theatre closed.

March 15: "The Crowd" (1928, King Vidor).

Movieland 8th Street Triplex, 36 E. 8th. (477-6600)

Theatre 1: "Sugar Hill" (Leon Ichaso), with Wesley Snipes and Michael Wright.

Theatre 2: Through March 10: "Ace Ventura: Pet Detective" (†). From March 11: "Guarding Tess" (Hugh Wilson).

Theatre 3: "Romeo Is Bleeding" (†).

Village Theatre VII, 3rd Ave. at 11th. (982-0400)

Theatre 1: "The Remains of the Day" (†).

Theatre 2: "On Deadly Ground" (†).

Theatre 3: "Philadelphia" (†).

Theatre 4: "Angie" (Martha Coolidge), with Geena Davis.

Theatre 5: "Silent Tongue" (Sam Shepard).

Theatre 6: "Blue Chips" (†).

Theatre 7: "Greedy" (Jonathan Lynn), with Michael J. Fox and Kirk Douglas.

Cinema Village, 22 E. 12th. (924-3363)

Through March 10: A program of Academy Award-nominated live-action and documentary short films.

From March 11: "Raining Stones" (Ken Loach).

Village East Cinemas, 2nd Ave. at 12th. (529-6799)

Theatre 1: Through March 10: "Blank Check" (Rupert Wainwright). From March 11: "The Ref" (Ted Demme).

Theatre 2: "My Father, the Hero" (Steve Miner), with Gérard Depardieu.

Theatre 3: "Short Cuts" (Robert Altman).

Theatre 4: "China Moon" (John Bailey), with Ed Harris and Madeleine Stowe.

Theatre 5: "8 Seconds" (John G. Avildsen), with Luke Perry.

Theatre 6: "Where the Rivers Flow North" (Jay Craven), with Rip Torn.

Theatre 7: "Fiorile" (†).

19th Street East 6, B'way at 19th. (260-8000)

Theatre 1: "Four Weddings and a Funeral" (Mike Newell).

Theatre 2: "Philadelphia" (†).

Theatre 3: "The Piano" (†).

Theatre 4: Through March 10: "What's Eating Gilbert Grape" (†). From March 11: "Guarding Tess" (Hugh Wilson).

Theatre 5: "China Moon" (John Bailey), with Ed Harris and Madeleine Stowe.

Theatre 6: "On Deadly Ground" (†).

Murray Hill Cinemas, 160 E. 34th. (689-6548)

Theatre 1: "Sugar Hill" (Leon Ichaso), with Wesley Snipes and Michael Wright.

Theatre 2: Through March 10: "My Father, the Hero" (Steve Miner), with Gérard Depardieu; and "Wedding Banquet" (Ang Lee). From March 11: "The Ref" (Ted Demme).

Theatre 3: Through March 10: "Farewell My *Concubine*" (Chen Kaige, *in Mandarin*). From March 11: "Guarding Tess" (Hugh Wilson).

Theatre 4: "Angie" (Martha Coolidge), with Geena Davis.

34th Street Showplace, 238 E. 34th. (532-5544)

Theatre 1: "China Moon" (John Bailey), with Ed Harris and Madeleine Stowe.

Theatre 2: "The Piano" (†).

Theatre 3: "Blue Chips" (†).

34th St. East, 241 E. 34th. (683-0255)

"Greedy" (Jonathan Lynn), with Michael J. Fox, Kirk Douglas, and Nancy Travis.

Eastside Playhouse, 3rd Ave. at 55th. (755-3020)

"Belle Époque" (Fernando Trueba; in Spanish).

Sutton 1 and 2, 3rd Ave. at 57th. (759-1411)

Theatre 1: "The Ref" (Ted Demme).

Theatre 2: "China Moon" (John Bailey), with Ed Harris and Madeleine Stowe.

Gotham Cinema, 3rd Ave. at 58th. (759-2262)

"The Chase" (Adam Rifkin).

Plaza, 42 E. 58th. (355-3320)

"What's Eating Gilbert Grape" (†).

Manhattan Twin, 3rd Ave. at 59th. (935-6420)

Theatre 1: "Sugar Hill" (Leon Ichaso), with Wesley Snipes and Michael Wright.

Theatre 2: "The Chase" (Adam Rifkin).

59th Street East Cinema, 239 E. 59th. (759-4630)

"Six Degrees of Separation" (†).

Baronet and Coronet, 3rd Ave. at 59th. (355-1663)

Theatre 1: "Midnight Cowboy" (1969, John Schlesinger), with Dustin Hoffman, Jon Voight, and Brenda Vaccaro.

Theatre 2: "Greedy" (Jonathan Lynn), with Michael J. Fox and Kirk Douglas.

Cinema I, Cinema II, and Cinema 3rd Avenue, 3rd Ave. at 60th. (753-6022)

Theatre 1: "Angie" (Martha Coolidge), with Geena Davis.

Theatre 2: "Blink" (Michael Apted), with Madeleine Stowe and Aidan Quinn.

Theatre 3: "8 Seconds" (John G. Avildsen), with Luke Perry.

First & 62nd Cinemas, 400 E. 62nd. (752-4600)

Theatre 1: "In the Name of the Father" (†).

Theatre 2: "Schindler's List" (†).

Theatre 3: "Schindler's List" (†).

Theatre 4: "Reality Bites" (†).

Theatre 5: "In the Name of the Father" (†).

Theatre 6: "The Piano" (†).

Gemini 1 and 2, 2nd Ave. at 64th. (832-1670)

Theatre 1: "On Deadly Ground" (†).

Theatre 2: "Philadelphia" (†).

Beekman, 2nd Ave. at 66th. (737-2622)

"Shadowlands" (Richard Attenborough), with Anthony Hopkins and Debra Winger.

New York Twin, 2nd Ave. at 67th. (744-7339)

Theatre 1: "Four Weddings and a Funeral" (Mike Newell).

Theatre 2: "Ace Ventura: Pet Detective" (†).

68th St. Playhouse, 3rd Ave. at 68th. (734-0302)

"Sirens" (John Duigan), with Hugh Grant, Tara Fitzgerald, and Sam Neill.

Tower East, 3rd Ave. at 71st. (879-1313)

Through March 10: "Silent Tongue" (Sam Shepard).

From March 11: "The Hudsucker Proxy" (Joel Coen).

East 85th Street, 1st Ave. at 85th. (249-5100)

"China Moon" (John Bailey), with Ed Harris and Madeleine Stowe.

Park & 86th Street Cinemas, 125 E. 86th. (534-1880)

Theatre 1: "Greedy" (Jonathan Lynn), with Michael J. Fox and Kirk Douglas.

Theatre 2: "Sugar Hill" (Leon Ichaso), with Wesley Snipes and Michael Wright.

Orpheum VII, 3rd Ave. at 86th. (876-2400)

Theatre 1: "Reality Bites" (†).

Theatre 2: Through March 10: "Ace Ventura: Pet Detective" (†). From March 11: "Guarding Tess" (Hugh Wilson).

Theatre 3: "Philadelphia" (†).

Theatre 4: "On Deadly Ground" (†).

Theatre 5: "What's Eating Gilbert Grape" (†).

Theatre 6: "Blue Chips" (†).

Theatre 7: "The Chase" (Adam Rifkin).

86th Street East Twin, 3rd Ave. at 86th. (249-1144)

Theatre 1: "Angie" (Martha Coolidge), with Geena Davis.

Theatre 2: Through March 10: "Blank Check" (Rupert Wainwright). From March 11: "The Ref" (Ted Demme).

WEST SIDE

Film Forum, 209 W. Houston St. (727-8110)

Theatre 1: "A Streetcar Named Desire" (1951, directed by Elia Kazan), with Vivien Leigh, Marlon Brando, Karl Malden, and Kim Hunter.

Theatre 2: See listings under Revival Houses.

Theatre 3: "The War Room" (D. A. Pennebaker and Chris Hegedus).

Waverly 1 and 2, 6th Ave. at 3rd. (929-8037)

Theatre 1: "In the Name of the Father" (†).

Theatre 2: "Six Degrees of Separation" (†).

Art Greenwich Twin, Greenwich Ave. at 12th. (929-3350)

Theatre 1: "Reality Bites" (†).

Theatre 2: "The Chase" (Adam Rifkin).

Quad Cinema, 34 W. 13th. (255-8800)

Theatre 1: "Paris, France" (Gerard Ciccoritti), with Leslie Hope.

Theatre 2: "The Scent of Green Papaya" (†).

Theatre 3: A program of short films from "The 24th International Tournée of Animation."

Theatre 4: Through March 10: "Farewell My Concubine" (Chen Kaige, *in Mandarin*). From March 11: "Calendar" (Atom Egoyan).

Chelsea Cinemas, 260 W. 23rd. (691-4744)

Theatre 1: "In the Name of the Father" (†).

Theatre 2: "Ace Ventura: Pet Detective" (†).

Theatre 3: "Greedy" (Jonathan Lynn), with Michael J. Fox and Kirk Douglas.

Theatre 4: "Schindler's List" (†).

Theatre 5: "Angie" (Martha Coolidge), with Geena Davis.

Theatre 6: "In the Name of the Father" (†).

Theatre 7: "Schindler's List" (†)

Theatre 8: "Reality Bites" (†).

Theatre 9: Through March 10: "The Chase" (Adam Rifkin). From March 11: "The Ref" (Ted Demme).

23rd St. West Triplex, 333 W. 23rd. (989-0060)

Theatre 1: "Sugar Hill" (Leon Ichaso), with Wesley Snipes and Michael Wright.

Theatre 2: "The Getaway" (Roger Donaldson).

Theatre 3: "Sugar Hill."

Guild, 33 W. 50th. (757-2406)

"Angie" (Martha Coolidge), with Geena Davis.

Worldwide Cinemas, 50th St. between 8th and 9th Aves. (246-1583)

Theatre 1: "The Accompanist" (Claude Miller; in French).

Theatre 2: "Addams Family Values" (†).

Theatre 3: "Geronimo: An American Legend" (Walter Hill), with Wes Studi.

Theatre 4: "The Joy Luck Club" (Wayne Wang).

Theatre 5: "The Summer House" (Waris Hussein).

Theatre 6: "Beethoven's 2nd" (Rod Daniel).

Ziegfeld, 141 W. 54th. (765-7600)

"I'll Do Anything" (James L. Brooks), with Nick Nolte and Whittni Wright.

Festival, 6 W. 57th. (307-7856)

"Romeo Is Bleeding" (†).

57th St. Playhouse, 110 W. 57th. (581-7360)

"Blink" (Michael Apted), with Madeleine Stowe and Aidan Quinn.

Carnegie Hall Cinemas, 7th Ave. between 56th and 57th. (265-2520)

Theatre 1: "Six Degrees of Separation" (†).

Theatre 2: "Like Water for Chocolate" (Alfonso Arau; a Mexican film, in Spanish).

Angelika 57, 225 W. 57th. (586-1900)

"Where the Rivers Flow North" (Jay Craven), with Rip Torn.

Paris, 4 W. 58th. (980-5656)

Through March 10: "The Remains of the Day" (†).

From March 11: "Germinal" (†).

Cinema 3, 2 W. 59th. (752-5959)

"The Age of Innocence" (Martin Scorsese).

Columbus Circle, B'way at 61st. (247-5070) "What's Eating Gilbert Grape" (†).

62nd & Broadway, 62 W. 62nd. (265-7466) "Reality Bites" (†).

Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, B'way at 63rd. (757-2280)
Theatre 1: "Fiorile" (†).
Theatre 2: "The Scent of Green Papaya" (†).
Theatre 3: "Blue" (Krzysztof Kieslowski; in French), with Juliette Binoche.
Theatre 4: "The Piano" (†).
Theatre 5: "The Snapper" (Stephen Frears).
Theatre 6: "Belle Époque" (Fernando Trueba; in Spanish).

Regency, B'way at 67th. (724-3700) "Schindler's List" (†).

84th Street Sixplex, B'way at 84th. (877-3600)
Theatre 1: "Philadelphia" (†).
Theatre 2: Through March 10: "Ace Ventura: Pet Detective" (†). From March 11: "The Ref" (Ted Demme).
Theatre 3: "Blue Chips" (†).
Theatre 4: "Angie" (Martha Coolidge), with Geena Davis.
Theatre 5: "On Deadly Ground" (†).
Theatre 6: "China Moon" (John Bailey), with Ed Harris and Madeleine Stowe.

Thalia, B'way at 95th. (316-4962) "Short Cuts" (Robert Altman).

Metro Cinema 1 and 2, B'way at 99th. (222-1200)
Theatre 1: "Blank Check" (Rupert Wainwright), with Brian Bonsall.
Theatre 2: "Greedy" (Jonathan Lynn), with Michael J. Fox and Kirk Douglas.

Olympia I and II, B'way at 107th. (865-8128)
Theatre 1: "Sugar Hill" (Leon Ichaso), with Wesley Snipes and Michael Wright.
Theatre 2: "The Chase" (Adam Rifkin).

TIMES SQUARE AREA

Criterion Center, B'way at 44th. (354-0900)
Theatre 1: "Ace Ventura: Pet Detective" (†).
Theatre 2: "The Chase" (directed by Adam Rifkin).
Theatre 3: Through March 10: "Reality Bites" (†). From March 11: "Guarding Tess" (Hugh Wilson).
Theatre 4: "On Deadly Ground" (†).
Theatre 5: "Gunmen" (Deran Sarafian).
Theatre 6: "Philadelphia" (†).
Theatre 7: Through March 10: "The Fugitive" (Andrew Davis), with Harrison Ford and Tommy Lee Jones. From March 11: "Lightning Jack" (Simon Wincer).

Embassy 1, B'way at 46th. (302-0494)
Through March 10: "Blank Check" (Rupert Wainwright).
From March 11: "The Ref" (Ted Demme).

Embassy 2, 3, and 4, 7th Ave. at 47th. (730-7262)
Theatre 1: "China Moon" (John Bailey), with Ed Harris and Madeleine Stowe.
Theatre 2: "Sister Act 2: Back in the Habit" (Bill Duke), with Whoopi Goldberg.
Theatre 3: Through March 10: "Tombstone" (George Cosmatos), with Kurt Russell. From March 11: "Blank Check" (Rupert Wainwright).

Astor Plaza, 44th St. at B'way. (869-8340) "Blue Chips" (†).

National Twin, B'way at 44th. (869-0950)
Theatre 1: "Greedy" (Jonathan Lynn), with Michael J. Fox and Kirk Douglas.
Theatre 2: "Sugar Hill" (Leon Ichaso), with Wesley Snipes and Michael Wright.

REVIVAL HOUSES

Film Forum 2, 209 W. Houston St. (727-8110)
Through March 10: "A Modern Hero" (1934, directed by G. W. Pabst) and "The Mad Genius" (1931, Michael Curtiz).
March 11-12: "The Mystery of the Wax Museum" (1933, Michael Curtiz) and "Dr. X" (†).
March 13: "Gold Diggers of 1933" (1933, Mervyn LeRoy) and "Golden Dawn" (1930, Ray Enright).
March 14: Two early films by Yasujiro Ozu: "Passing Fancy" (1933) and "The Only Son" (1936).
March 15: "Safe in Hell" (1931, William Wellman) and "Mandalay" (1934, Michael Curtiz).

Theatre 80 St. Marks, 80 St. Marks Pl. (254-7400)
March 9: "Rebel Without a Cause" (1955, Nicholas Ray), with James Dean; and "Blue Denim" (1959, Philip Dunne).
March 10: "Twelve Angry Men" (1957, Sidney Lumet) and "Witness for the Prosecution" (1958, Billy Wilder).
March 11-12: "Lolita" (1962, Stanley Kubrick) and "Killer's Kiss" (1955, Kubrick).
March 13: "The Entertainer" (1960, Tony Richardson), with Laurence Olivier; and "Look Back in Anger" (1959, Tony Richardson), with Richard Burton.
March 14: "Gate of Hell" (1954, Teinosuke Kinugasa; in Japanese) and "Page of Madness" (1926, Kinugasa; a Japanese silent film).
March 15: "Life of Brian" (1979, Terry Jones) and "Time Bandits" (1981, Terry Gilliam).

FILM LIBRARIES, ETC.

Museum of Modern Art, Roy and Niuta Titus Theatres, 11 W. 53rd St. (708-9480)—A program of films starring Jeanne Moreau. March 10 at 2:30: "La Notte" (1960, directed by Michelangelo Antonioni; in Italian).... March 10 at 6: "Mademoiselle" (1965, Tony Richardson).... March 10 at 8 and March 13 at 12:30: "Mata-Hari, Agent H 21" (1964, Jean-Louis Richard; in French).... March 11 at 2:30 and March 14 at 6: "Nathalie Granger" (1972, Marguerite Duras; in French).... March 11 at 6: "The Lovers" (1958, Louis Malle; in French).... March 11 at 8 and March 12 at 12:30: "A Foreign Field" (1993, Charles Sturridge).... March 12 at 2:45: "Jules and Jim" (1962, François Truffaut; in French).... March 12 at 5 and March 14 at 2:30: "Dialogue of the Carmelites" (1960, René-Léopold Bruckberger; in French).... March 13 at 2:45: "Mr. Klein" (1977, Joseph Losey; in French).... March 13 at 5: "Joanna Francesa" (1973, Carlos Diegues; in Portuguese).... March 15 at 2:30: "L'Adolescente" (1976, Moreau; in French).... March 15 at 6: "French Provincial" (†).... ¶ A program of films produced by Gaumont, the French movie studio. March 10 at 6: "Les Vampires, Episodes 7-8" (1915-16, Louis Feuillade; a silent film).... March 11 at 6: "Les Vampires, Episodes 9-10.".. . March 12 at 1: "Judex" (1916-17, Louis Feuillade; a silent film lasting almost six hours, with two intermissions).... March 13 at 2:30: "The Red Sweater" (1979, Michel Drach).... March 13 at 5: "Hail Mary" (1985, Jean-Luc Godard).... March 14 at 6: "Judex, Prologue and Episodes 1-5.".. . March 15 at 6: "Judex, Episodes 6-12 and Epilogue."

Walter Reade Theatre, Lincoln Center, 165 W. 65th St., plaza level. (875-5600)—March 9 at 2, 4:30, 7:05, and 9:40: "Why Has Bodhi-Dharma Left for the East?" (1989, Bae Yong-kuan).... ¶ March 10 at 2, 4:15, 6:40, and 9: "Tous les Matins du Monde" (1991, Alain Corneau; in French).... ¶ A program of films directed by Robert Aldrich. March 11 at 2 and March 12 at 3:30: "The Big Leaguer" (1953).... March 11 at 5:45, March 13 at 3:30, and March 15 at 2: "World for Ransom" (1954).... March 11 at 3:30 and 7:45, March 12 at 7, and March 13 at 7:15: "Kiss Me Deadly" (1955).... March 12 at 5 and 9:10: "Apache" (1954).... March 13 at 5:15 and 9:15: "Vera Cruz" (†)

American Museum of the Moving Image, 35th Ave. at 36th St., Astoria. (1-718 784-0077)—Films by Steven Spielberg. March 12 at 1:30: "Empire of the Sun" (1987).... ¶ March 12 at 4:15: A program of independent and experimental films.... ¶ Films by Oscar Micheaux. March 13 at 2: "God's Stepchildren" (1938).... ¶ March 13 at 4:30: "Imitation of Life" (1934, John Stahl), with Claudette Colbert and Louise Beavers.

Brooklyn Museum, 200 Eastern Parkway. (1-718 638-5000)—A program called "Hollywood and the French New Wave." March 12 at 12:30: "To Be or Not to Be" (1942, Ernst Lubitsch), with Carole Lombard and Jack Benny; and "The Last Metro" (1981, François Truffaut; in French), with Catherine Deneuve and Gérard Depardieu....¶ March 13 at 12:30: "Scarface" (1932, Howard Hawks), with Paul Muni; and "Breathless" (1959, Jean-Luc Godard; in French), with Jean Seberg and Jean-Paul Belmondo.

Florence Gould Hall, 55 E. 59th St. (355-6160)—March 9 at 12:30, 3:15, 6, and 8:45: "Night and Day" (1991, Chantal Akerman; in French).

Japan Society, 333 E. 47th St. (752-0824)—"Pacific Reflections: How Japan and America See Each Other in Film." March 11 at 6:30: "Mr. Baseball" (1991, Fred Schepisi), with Tom Selleck and Ken Takakura.

Anthology Film Archives, 32 Second Ave., at 2nd St. (505-5181)—March 9 and 15 at 5: "Bukowski" (1971, Taylor Hackford).... ¶ March 9 at 6, March 12 at noon, and March 15 at 6: "The Bukowski Tapes" (1988, Barbet Schroeder).... ¶ March 9 and 15 at 8: "Barfly" (1987, Schroeder), with Mickey Rourke, Faye Dunaway, and Alice Krige.... ¶ March 10 at 7: A program of films by Robert Morris and Babette Mangolte.... ¶ A program of films by Konrad Wolf. March 11 at 6 and March 12 at 8: "I Was Nineteen" (1968).... March 11 and 13 at 8: "The Divided Heaven" (1964).... March 12 at 6: "The Naked Man on the Playing Field" (1974).... March 12 at 10 and March 13 at 6: "Lissy" (1957).... ¶ March 13 at 11: "John Cage, Philip Glass, Meredith Monk, Robert Ashley" (Peter Greenaway).... ¶ March 13 at 4 and 10: A program of films by Sadie Benning.

John Duigan's "Sirens."

J. P. FOREST

MOVIES IN BRIEF

FILMS OPENING THIS WEEK

Calendar—Atom Egoyan directs and stars in this comedy about a pompous Armenian-Canadian photographer who travels to Armenia on an assignment to shoot historical churches. With Arsinee Khanjian as the photographer's wife and Ashot Adamian as the guide she falls in love with. Opening March 11.

Four Weddings and a Funeral—Mike Newell's romantic comedy about an English bachelor (Hugh Grant) and the freewheeling American (Andie MacDowell) he keeps encountering at social affairs. Opening March 9.

Germinal—Claude Berri's adaption of Émile Zola's novel. With Gérard Depardieu, Miou-Miou, Renaud, and Judith Henry. In French. (Reviewed this week in The Current Cinema.) Opening March 11.

Guarding Tess—A crotchety former First Lady and an uptight Secret Service agent assigned to protect her bicker and fight their way to friendship. Shirley MacLaine and Nicolas Cage are the stars. Directed by Hugh Wilson. Opening March 11.

The Hudsucker Proxy—Joel and Ethan Coen and Sam Raimi wrote the screenplay for this screwball comedy set in New York in the late fifties. When the head of Hudsucker Industries commits suicide, an executive (Paul Newman) schemes to take over by putting a dolt from the mailroom (Tim Robbins) in charge. With Jennifer Jason Leigh and Charles Durning. Directed by Joel Coen. Opening March 11.

Lightning Jack—A Western starring Paul Hogan (who wrote the script) as an Australian outlaw who can't get any respect, Cuba Gooding, Jr., as his mute sidekick, and Beverly D'Angelo as a saloon queen. Directed by Simon Wincer. Opening March 11.

Raining Stones—Set in the North of England, Ken Loach's film follows the adventures of an unemployed working-class father (Bruce Jones) who will do anything to get his daughter a First Communion dress. Written by Jim Allen. Opening March 11.

The Ref—Denis Leary as a bumbling thief who kidnaps a couple on Christmas Eve, only to end up hostage to their marital feud. With Judy Davis and Kevin Spacey. The script is by Richard LaGravenese, who wrote "The Fisher King," and Mary Weiss. Directed by Ted Demme. Opening March 9.

CURRENT FILMS

(The following notes are by Anthony Lane, Terrence Rafferty, and Michael Sragow. If a movie has been reviewed in The Current Cinema, the date of its review is given.)

Ace Ventura: Pet Detective—A go-for-broke buffoon, double-jointed from the eyeballs down, Jim Carrey can be funny for three minutes at a time on "In Living Color." In this smutty kiddie farce he's a clownish action toy, and he grows wearying, fast. Playing the "pet detective" hired to find the Miami Dolphins' mascot, he doesn't get much chemistry going with the supporting animals, let alone the supporting cast (Sean Young, Courteney Cox, Tone Loc, and Dolphins quarterback Dan Marino). His comic language is made up of accent marks, not characters; instead of inhabiting a scene, he swallows it up and spits it out in manic doodles. Tom Shadyac directed and co-wrote the script with Carrey and Jack Bernstein.—M.S. (New York Twin, Chelsea Cinemas, and Criterion Center. . . . ¶ Movieland 8th Street Triplex, Orpheum VII, and 84th Street Sixplex; through March 10.)

Addams Family Values—Some bold anti-wholesome gags pepper the scenes that chronicle the arrival of Baby Pubert (Kaitlyn and Kristin Hooper), the homicidal jealousy of young Wednesday (the uncanny Christina Ricci) and Pugsley (Jimmy Workman), and their subsequent banishment to Camp Chippewa. The marriage of Uncle Fester (Christopher Lloyd) to a clumsy, tacky black-widow murderer (Joan Cusack) doesn't work out as well; there's something off about the way this bad-taste, sick-joke movie condemns the villainess for her nouveau-riche style and affectations. But Anjelica Huston's murmuring understatement as Morticia is still amusing; she's delicious when she sniffs at pastels and glumly reads "The Cat in the Hat." Raul Julia returns as the dashing Gomez, and Christopher Hart as the dexterous Thing. Paul Rudnick wrote the gleefully barbed script, and Ken Adam did the aptly Addamsy production design. Barry Sonnenfeld directed, more nimbly than usual.—M.S. (Worldwide Cinemas.)

Blue Chips—Ron Shelton wrote the script, but the finished product shows none of the street wit and grace of "Bull Durham" and "White Men Can't Jump," the sports movies he both wrote and directed. Featuring a slew of college and pro players and coaches, from Shaquille O'Neal to Bob Cousy, this movie should be "all net"; instead, it's all hot air. William Friedkin brings his smash-and-grab brand of directing to the subject of illegal college-basketball recruitment. Nick Nolte plays a good-hearted coach who lets alumni buy him a winning team. Not even Nolte can pull off this hyped-up jeremiad. The coach's turns of conscience are preordained and his relationships bogus (especially his marriage to Mary McDonnell). The hoop footage lacks focus, personality, and rhythm.—M.S. (Village Theatre VII, 34th Street Showplace, Orpheum VII, 84th Street Sixplex, and Astor Plaza.)

Fiorile—The new movie by Paolo and Vittorio Taviani is a family saga that, according to the filmmakers, is based on legends they heard while they were growing up in Tuscany. The picture, spanning two hundred years, tells the story of the Benedettis (who are sometimes referred to by the locals as the Maledettis). The Benedettis begin as peasants and become wealthy landowners, but their prosperity and power derive from an original sin, committed in the seventeen-nineties, for which future generations have never received full absolution. The screenplay, by the Tavianis and Sandro Petraglia, is constructed as a series of historical tales framed by a contemporary story in which members of the three surviving generations of the Benedettis illustrate, in various ways, the consequences of their blighted family history. Although the movie is elegantly made and has moments of great beauty, it somehow falls short of delivering the tremendous emotional impact that it promises. The three legends we're told about the family aren't extraordinary in themselves, and the thematic structure—the whole saga comes down to a parable about love versus greed—is disappointingly banal. In Italian.—T.R. (Reviewed in our issue of 2/7/94.) (Village East Cinemas, and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

Germinal—Directed by Claude Berri. In French. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Paris; starting March 11.)

In the Name of the Father—Jim Sheridan's ragged, fascinating new movie is based on the autobiography of Gerry Conlon, a Belfast Catholic who spent nearly fifteen years in British prisons for a crime he didn't commit. Conlon (Daniel Day-Lewis) and three friends were accused of participating in the 1974 bombing of a pub near London, in which five people were killed; the only evidence against Conlon was his own confession, extracted from him by means of a brutal police interrogation. When Sheridan and his co-screenwriter, Terry George, try to function as historians, the movie feels shaky. But when Gerry and his father (Pete Postlethwaite)—who has been convicted on a different charge—get to prison, the filmmakers begin to explore their real theme, which is the intimate emotional consequences of oppression and prejudice. With Emma Thompson, Don Baker, and Corin Redgrave.—T.R. (1/24/94) (First & 62nd Cinemas, Waverly and Chelsea Cinemas.)

On Deadly Ground—This high-tech, low-I.Q. Northwestern proves that a glacier *is* more expressive than Steven Seagal. The two-fisted (and two-footed) guardian of vulgar liberalism allies himself with the Eskimos when he goes on the warpath against cold-blooded oil tycoon Michael Caine. Davy Crockett and Daniel Boone proudly killed bears; under the guidance of the Inuit, Seagal communes with the mystic spirit of the Bear, then slaughters any unfortunate human who interferes with his attempt to disable Caine's polluting oil rig. First-time director Seagal gets off on shots of bad guys thrown through glass. The Alaskan locations are gorgeous, but this bludgeoning, ludicrous movie provokes nostalgia for melodramas that had cardboard scenery and real people. With Joan Chen. Cinematography by Ric Waite; screenplay by Ed Horowitz and Robin U. Russin.—M.S. (Village Theatre VII, 19th Street East 6, Gemini, Orpheum VII, 84th Street Sixplex, and Criterion Center.)

Philadelphia—Tom Hanks plays a lawyer dismissed from his firm, apparently for incompetence, but really because he has AIDS. Enter Denzel Washington as a personal-injury attorney—relaxed, witty, and homophobic, but prepared to fight for justice. The result is an unorthodox blend of courtroom drama and old-style weepie, and somehow it comes off. With Jonathan Demme in charge there's a guarantee of taste and skill—if anything, the movie is too optimistic, convinced that everyone in America can be won round to its own standards of tolerance. Of course it should stand up for gay rights, but do we also need a speech about how wonderful lawyers are? Fortunately, this preachiness never swamps the picture, thanks largely to spirited playing from Tom Hanks, who looks full of life right up to the end. The movie is affecting, sometimes silly, but determined to take risks.—A.L. (12/27/93-1/3/94) (Village Theatre VII, 19th Street East 6, Gemini, Orpheum VII, 84th Street Sixplex, and Criterion Center.)

The Piano—Sometime in the last century, a Scottish mute called Ada (Holly Hunter) travels to New Zealand with her beloved piano and her daughter Flora (Anna Paquin). She is engaged to Stewart (Sam Neill), but it is his right-hand man, Baines (Harvey Keitel), who becomes the focus of her interest. He buys the piano, and gives her a chance to win it back: an erotic agreement that gathers intensity and drives the film onward to its gasping conclusion. The writer and director, Jane Campion, has turned her native New Zealand, with its desolate beaches and writhing forests, into a potent backdrop; the rain and mud make the love story look like trench warfare—you come away from the movie battered and amazed. It's almost too wrought and compressed for its own good, but the performances breathe it full of life. Hunter, especially, gives a fiery portrait of a rebellious Victorian spirit.—A.L. (11/29/93) (Angelika Film Center, 19th Street East 6, 34th Street Showplace, First & 62nd Cinemas, and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

Reality Bites—Ben Stiller's film is a romantic comedy about what has come to be called Generation X. The characters are just out of college, and they're not thrilled about their prospects: they're overeducated and underemployed, and no one seems to know, or care, what they're going through. The script, by Helen Childress, is packed with knowing pop-culture references, and the soundtrack is filled with the music of college-radio favorites like World Party and Juliana Hatfield. The picture has its charms: Stiller's direction gives it an appropriately loose, drifting rhythm; Winona Ryder, in the central role, has a fresh, natural style that makes even the most contrived dialogue sound authentic. But the story is essentially a thin and conventional romantic triangle, straight out of thirties Hollywood; the filmmakers try to disguise the fluffiness by unleashing a torrent of trash-culture allusions and sociological truisms. When the movie is over, you don't feel as if you had shared the experience of a new generation; you feel puzzled and vaguely crummy, as if you had just read a solemn news-magazine cover story about it. Also with Stiller, Ethan Hawke, Janeane Garofalo, Steve Zahn, and John Mahoney.—T.R. (3/7/94) (First & 62nd Cinemas, Orpheum VII, Art Greenwich Twin, Chelsea Cinemas, and 62nd & Broadway. . . . ¶ Criterion Center; through March 10.)

The Remains of the Day—Anthony Hopkins plays Stevens, a butler who has given long and faithful service at Darlington Hall and maintained his emotional temperature at absolute zero. This has cost him dearly: first, he failed to see that his master (James Fox) was dangerously bent on appeasement with the Germans in the nineteen-thirties; and, second, he refused to accept, or even acknowledge, the love offered to him by the housekeeper (Emma Thompson). Adapted by Ruth Prawer Jhabvala from the novel by Kazuo Ishiguro, this Merchant-Ivory production strains so hard to portray dignified restraint that it almost seizes up with good manners. This is especially unfair to Thompson, who is forced to smother her naturally high spirits.—A.L. (11/15/93) (Village Theatre VII. . . . ¶ Paris; through March 10.)

Romeo Is Bleeding—The writer and co-producer, Hilary Henkin, proves that a female moviemaker can be brutal and derivative, too. At the center of this arty melodrama are a sorry doofus of a crooked New York cop (Gary Oldman), his ditzy mistress (Juliette Lewis), his fed-up wife (Annabella Sciorra), and the vicious femme fatale (Lena Olin) who costs him everything. Henkin and the director, Peter Medak, imagine they can revive film noir by halving an antihero's I.Q. and kinking up his sex life. The audience is supposed to take this witless film as black comedy simply because the evil is bottomless and the characterizations are over the top.—M.S. (Movieland 8th Street Triplex, and Festival.)

Savage Nights—This is the story of Jean, a young French bisexual filmmaker with AIDS, caught between the opposing charms of Laura (Romane Bohringer) and Samy (Carlos López). He is played by Cyril Collard, a young French bisexual filmmaker with AIDS, who also directed the movie and wrote the screenplay, based on his own original novel. (Collard died last year.) For those who who found "Philadelphia" too kindly and sanitized, the emotional dirt of "Savage Nights" will come as a relief; when Laura learns of Jean's condition, she throws a fit and then takes off his condom, wanting to prove her love with perilous sex. It's that old French refrain, the dark poetry of the death wish, and the best scenes consist simply of the hero gunning his red sports car through the night. But the movie disintegrates badly, and loses force; the characters seem not so much to be living through their experiences as using them to strike a philosophical pose. In French.—A.L. (Angelika Film Center.)

The Scent of Green Papaya—Vietnam's first Academy Award nominee for best foreign film offers an easy-to-resist blend of indoor nature chronicle (it could be subtitled "The Insects and Reptiles of Saigon") and bittersweet remembrance. The writer-director, Tran Anh Hung, has a visual idea or two; in prolonged, gliding tracking shots he traces the progress of a provincial girl named Mui, who works for a deceptively comfortable Saigon family and then for an eligible composer. When the camera skates through homes as neat and geometric as dioramas, it makes viewers feel as if they were on a moving sidewalk at a World's Fair exhibition about South Vietnam before the fall. The result is a kind of 3-D calligraphy rather than dramatic moviemaking. In Vietnamese.—M.S. (Quad Cinema, and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

Schindler's List—The story of Oskar Schindler (Liam Neeson), a dashing and resourceful German Catholic businessman who saved over a thousand Polish Jews from almost certain annihilation by the Nazis, is extraordinary even by the standards of Holocaust literature. Steven Spielberg's film, adapted by Steven Zaillian from the 1982 book by Thomas Keneally, runs better than three hours and doesn't seem a minute too long. Spielberg respects the essential mystery of the protagonist's heroism, and uses his prodigious skills with an intensity that he hasn't shown in a long time: he captures images of experiences that most of us thought we would never see represented adequately on the screen. This is by far the finest, fullest dramatic (i.e. nondocumentary) film ever made about the Holocaust. With Ralph Fiennes, Ben Kingsley, and Embeth Davidtz. The wonderfully expressive black-and-white cinematography is by Janusz Kaminski.—T.R. (12/20/93) (First & 62nd Cinemas, Chelsea Cinemas, and Regency.)

Geena Davis in "Angie."

VICTOR JUHASZ

Six Degrees of Separation—Fred Schepisi's film of John Guare's brilliant play about affluent, liberal-seeming New Yorkers who are conned by a young, gay black man claiming to be the son of Sidney Poitier. It's as agile and as inventive a visualization of complex theatrical material as you'll ever see. Guare's script (which sticks close to the text of the play) is a virtuoso comedy of upper-middle-class Manhattan manners, and the writing is amazingly nimble and unpredictable. His subject is the possibility, and the necessity, of seeing the world through someone else's eyes. The odd empathy that develops between the privileged heroine, Ouisa (Stockard Channing), and the young hustler (Will Smith) is moving because it emerges, unexpectedly, out of their radically different—but equally ingenious—strategies for manipulating experience. Their cleverness, like Guare's, ultimately transcends itself. Schepisi's direction keeps the movie charging forward, driven by its locomotive wit, until near the end, when we find ourselves set down in a huge and thrillingly unfamiliar emotional landscape, hardly knowing how we got there. It's a wonderful ride.—T.R. (59th Street East Cinema, Waverly, and Carnegie Hall Cinema.)

What's Eating Gilbert Grape—The small-town setting is Endora, Iowa; the hero (Johnny Depp) is a grocery clerk who can't endure it. He and his two sisters (Laura Harrington and Mary Kate Schellhardt) are stuck there while they take care of a morbidly obese mother who won't leave the house (Darlene Cates) and a mentally challenged brother named Arnie (Leonardo DiCaprio). The director, Lasse Hallström, aims for a tragicomic fable that says a rut is as deep as you make it; he tries to be sensitive without being boring. But the film is still implicitly condescending since almost all the characters (including the afflicted ones) function as tests of Gilbert's patience. John C. Reilly and Crispin Glover (as Gilbert's buddies) contribute affable comic turns, but the exuberant, inventive DiCaprio is the only one who transcends the flatness of the storytelling.—M.S. (Plaza, Orpheum VII, and Columbus Circle. . . . ¶ 19th Street East 6; through March 10.)

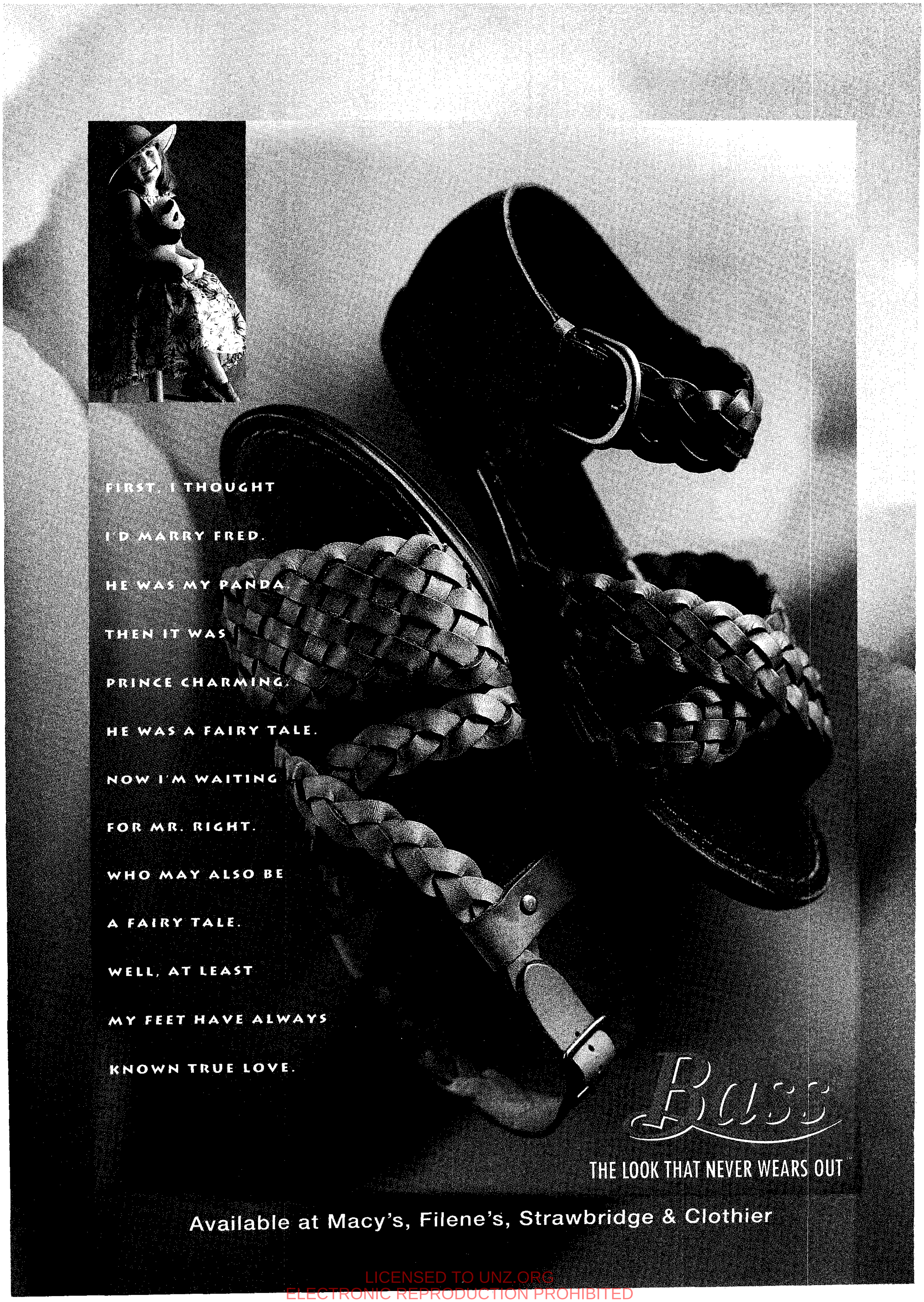
REVIVALS

(The following notes are by Pauline Kael and Michael Sragow.)

Dr. X (1932)—A famous chiller about a series of murders committed during the full moon in the vicinity of a medical college. It's the source of many of the most delirious clichés of the mad-scientist genre, and the first of Fay Wray's horror films (she gets to scream in her very first scene). But the pacing is very deliberate and it's a little tedious, especially in the wisecracking comedy-relief scenes with Lee Tracy as the reporter-hero; Tracy's vocal tricks and stylized gestures fall flat here. (One wouldn't guess how funny he would be that same year in "Blessed Event," or the year after in "Bombshell.") The title role, Dr. Xavier, is played by Lionel Atwill, an expert at polished menace; he can be wonderful in the way he examines a corpse while commenting, "Strangely enough, only the left deltoid has been severed." His suavity is heavy, though, and he weighs this picture down a bit. The director, Michael Curtiz, plays things too straight; he doesn't have the perverse comic sense of a James Whale.—P.K. (Film Forum 2; March 11-12.)

French Provincial (1975)—A gifted young romantic wit, André Téchiné has turned parody into something so emotionally charged that the meanings radiate every which way. The story spans several decades, contrasting the lives of two brides—Jeanne Moreau, as Berthe the no-nonsense seamstress, and Marie-France Pisier, as Régina the rapacious bourgeois dreamer—who are both too much for their husbands. Scenes take you back through so many layers of film history that you can't sort out all the influences, but this rich impasto is essentially new. The picture is effective on the most sophisticated level but naïve and scatterbrained on some of the simplest levels—such as that of telling a coherent story. In French.—P.K. (Museum of Modern Art; March 15.)

Vera Cruz (1954)—Gary Cooper, as an honorable Confederate colonel who becomes a soldier of fortune in Mexico, asks the key question for this and all the South-of-the-Border Westerns that followed: "What gets into Americans down here?" Robert Aldrich's SuperScope and Technicolor spectacle, co-starring Burt Lancaster as Cooper's greedy sometime partner, introduces the dynamic cross-cultural imagery and iconoclasm later explored in films from "The Magnificent Seven" to "The Professionals" and "The Wild Bunch." It's an exotic, entertaining shoot-'em-up, with a cast that includes Denise Darcel, Cesar Romero, George Macready, Ernest Borgnine, Charles Bronson, and Jack Elam. Script by Roland Kibbee, James R. Webb, and Borden Chase.—M.S. (Walter Reade Theatre; March 13.)



FIRST, I THOUGHT
I'D MARRY FRED.
HE WAS MY PANDA.
THEN IT WAS
PRINCE CHARMING.
HE WAS A FAIRY TALE.
NOW I'M WAITING
FOR MR. RIGHT.
WHO MAY ALSO BE
A FAIRY TALE.
WELL, AT LEAST
MY FEET HAVE ALWAYS
KNOWN TRUE LOVE.

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THE NEW YORKER

THE TALK OF THE TOWN

BRINGING IT ALL BACK HOME

MICHAEL GUZOFSKY is a leader here of Kahane Chai ("Kahane Lives"), a small group of mostly Israeli and American Jews who hold the militant anti-Arab views of the late Rabbi Meir Kahane, and as soon as he heard about the shooting last Tuesday of four Hasidic students on the Brooklyn Bridge he was sure it had been carried out by an Arab in retaliation for the Hebron massacre four days before, which was carried out by his friend Dr. Baruch Goldstein. Mr. Guzofsky, who sat down with us in Brooklyn just hours after the bridge shooting, and many hours before the police arrested a Lebanese national and charged him with fifteen counts of attempted murder in the attack, knew it had been an example of "Arab terrorism," because of eyewitness reports he'd been given and because, as he put it, the bridge is a symbol, and "symbols are important to them." He also said that while the victims of the bridge attack were innocents, the scores of Palestinians murdered as they knelt in prayer in a mosque were not—and, therefore, Dr. Goldstein (who was born in Brooklyn) was not a terrorist. "If you're a lamb surrounded by wolves, you might have to put on wolves' clothing," Mr. Guzofsky said.

Mr. Guzofsky does not speak for the Jews of New York, but he does speak to the fact that, increasingly, the city has become a battleground for some of the world's more bitter struggles. Like Sheikh Omar Abdel-Rahman or, say, those who were convicted last Friday in the World Trade Center bombing trial, Mr. Guzofsky is at once there and here; and to him it is simply that he is fighting on more than one front. "I would urge Jews to leave for Israel," he said, meaning Israel proper and also the Occupied Territories. "But if they're foolish enough to remain, then they should certainly learn how to defend themselves, which includes the legal acquisition of weapons."

The meeting place that Mr. Guzofsky had chosen—Café Kapulsky, on Avenue J in Midwood—seemed totally at odds with the idea of any approaching apocalypse in Brooklyn. Avenue J is a tidy, bustling, no-empty-storefronts neighborhood shopping street in a largely Orthodox Jewish area, with a Russian-American grocery, a Ukrainian-American deli, Jerusalem II Kosher Pizza, and Glatt Chow, a kosher Chinesee restaurant. And Café Kapulsky, new and cheerful, is the first American branch of a celebrated chain of Israeli cafés and pastry shops.

Mr. Guzofsky is twenty-nine years old and stocky, and has a head of dark curly hair. He wears glasses with narrow rims, and that day he had on a slightly rumpled double-breasted gray flannel suit and a white shirt open at the neck. He cradled a cup of Kapulsky coffee in his hands as he spoke. Mr. Guzofsky's public rhetoric can be harsh, remorseless, ugly. He handed us a post-Hebron-massacre Kahane Chai press release that said, "If Rabin would not be such a self-hating, timid wimp, he would have told Arafat 'sit down and shut up. You finally got a taste of your own medicine and a taste of what we go through everyday at the hands of your henchmen.' " But what he said over coffee was presented in a quietly conversational tone of voice.

One of Mr. Guzofsky's favorite themes is that there is no life for Jews, physically or spiritually, outside Israel. He himself was born in New York, moved to Israel when he was eighteen, and spent the next ten years there, working as Kahane's advance man and serving nearly two of those years in jail for a succession of anti-Arab incidents, including the fire bombing of an Arab newspaper office—crimes of which he was eventually acquitted. These days, he organizes Kahane Chai chapters abroad and in America—there are approximately six thousand members nation-

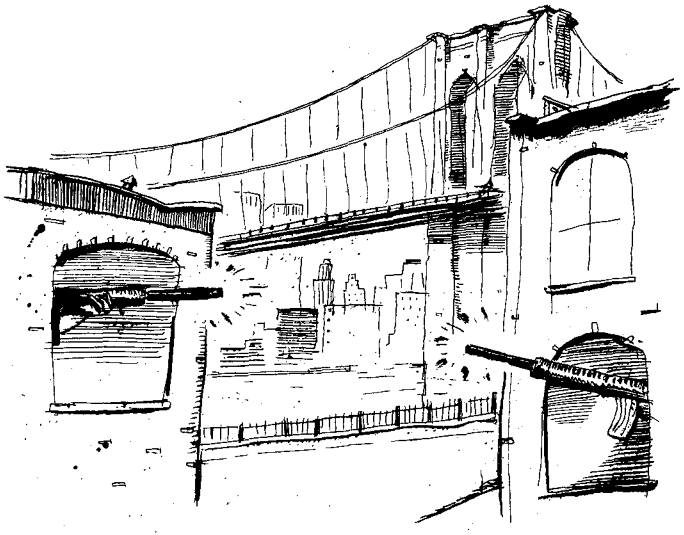
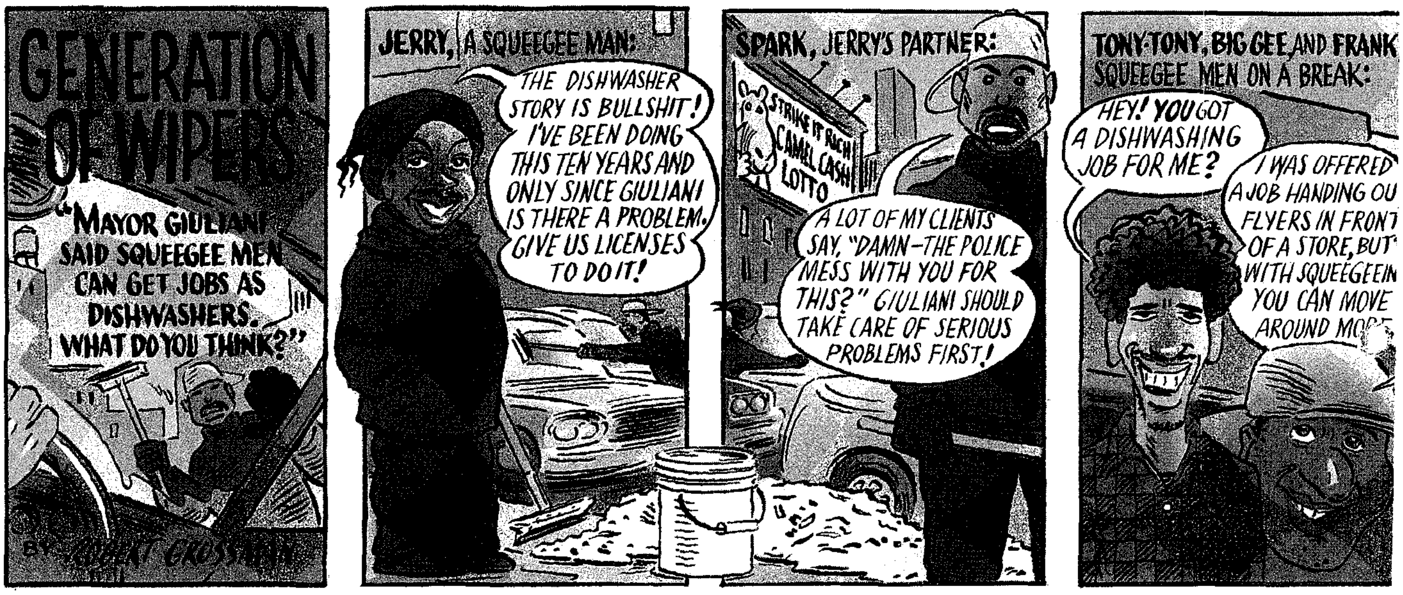


ILLUSTRATION BY BARRY BLITT


GENERATION OF WIPERS
"MAYOR GIULIANI SAID SQUEEGEE MEN CAN GET JOBS AS DISHWASHERS. WHAT DO YOU THINK?"
BY ROBERT GROSSMAN
JERRY, A SQUEEGEE MAN:
THE DISHWASHER STORY IS BULLSHIT! I'VE BEEN DOING THIS TEN YEARS AND ONLY SINCE GIULIANI IS THERE A PROBLEM. GIVE US LICENSES TO DO IT!
SPARK, JERRY'S PARTNER:
STRIKE IT RICH CAMEL CASH LOTTO
A LOT OF MY CLIENTS SAY, "DAMN—THE POLICE MESS WITH YOU FOR THIS?" GIULIANI SHOULD TAKE CARE OF SERIOUS PROBLEMS FIRST!
TONY-TONY, BIG GEE, AND FRANK
SQUEEGEE MEN ON A BREAK:
HEY! YOU GOT A DISHWASHING JOB FOR ME?
I WAS OFFERED A JOB HANDING OU FLYERS IN FRONT OF A STORE, BUT WITH SQUEEGEEIN YOU CAN MOVE AROUND MO

wide, according to Mr. Guzofsky—and makes about a hundred speeches a year at high schools and colleges.

"I grew up in Rockaway, in Queens," he said. "It was a tough neighborhood even then, the kind of place where people lock their car doors and run red lights when they drive through, but I used to play handball and stickball with the African-American and Puerto Rican kids in the schoolyard every afternoon. I ran into one of those kids recently at a Manhattan demonstration—he was a policeman, and we had a good chat about old times. There was an Arab who owned a grocery store near our house, and I used to hang out there, trying to study a little Arabic. If I had any trouble, it was with the whites—the Irish kids I had to pass on my bike on the way to my yeshiva."

What kind of trouble?

"Oh, a few names, a few fisticuffs. I didn't see any pogroms or Crown Heights, if that's what you mean, but I certainly, over time, gained the strong feeling that someday the end would come for the American Jewish community, that exile"—by which he meant life outside Israel—"is a graveyard for a Jew. Kahane interested me, because he stuck up for oppressed Jews everywhere. The Torah says that at best a Gentile will tolerate a Jew. When I was eighteen, I went to Israel with a round-trip ticket, and when I got there I tore up the ticket home."

After a slight pause, Mr. Guzofsky added, "I mean to America." Then he went on, "It's not a question of paranoia. I went to Palm Beach recently to protest an appearance by Shimon Peres, and seventy skinheads showed up—a very disciplined group, very well put together. I know what it takes to get that size group out onto the streets—it's what I do for a living. It means you have to have the quiet, sympathetic backing of at least five thousand people."

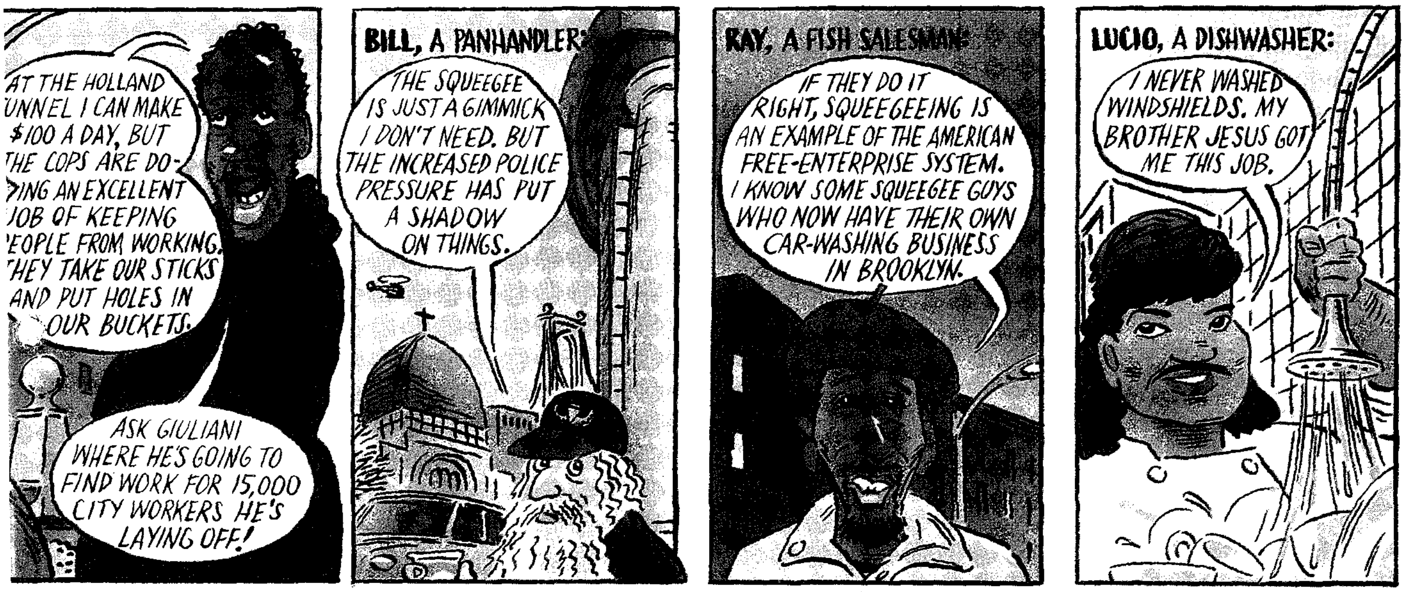
We mentioned that for many people around the globe, New York remains a world city in the best sense: open, welcoming, tolerant.

"That does not exist anymore," he said, with no anger, and with no apparent sense of his role in it all.

KIM IL SUNG, UP CLOSE AND PERSONAL

STEPHEN LINTON called to tell us he was back from Pyongyang with a story about Bill Clinton and Kim Il Sung. Suffice it to say that almost no one calls us to say he is back from Pyongyang, because almost no one goes there, and absolutely no one has ever called before with a story involving the President of the United States and the President (still) of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, which is North Korea. Mr. Linton, who is forty-three, was until a couple of years ago the associate director of the Center for Korean Research at Columbia University (he is now a consultant to various foundations and teaches Korean religion at Columbia) and has been to Pyongyang nine times, so he is probably the only New Yorker who could have called us with a story about these two Presidents—two Presidents who have of late been disagreeing about whether North Korea is developing a nuclear weapon. And that brings us to Mr. Linton's story.

Mr. Linton travelled to Pyongyang in late January with Billy Graham, the evangelist. Dr. Graham was carrying a message from President Clinton. Dr. Graham and Mr. Linton met with President Kim at a time when the Clinton Administration was pressing President Kim to allow international inspectors into seven sites where it was suspected that the North Koreans might be building a nuclear bomb. Dr. Graham had met President Kim on a previous trip, which, like this one, was intended as a good-will visit and also offered the evangelist the prospect of preaching a sermon in a country where the state religion is the worship of the Great Leader, President Kim. The brief message from President Clinton he carried this time held out the possibility of better relations once the nuclear issue was resolved. According to Mr. Linton, who acted as an interpreter during the meeting, President Kim, upon receiving the message, responded that President Clinton had the logic reversed: First, the two Presidents should establish a relationship, because, in the Korean context, until they did so they could not talk about problems. "It was too short, too cool, and too blunt to be polite from a


AT THE HOLLAND UNNEL I CAN MAKE $100 A DAY, BUT HE COPS ARE DO- ING AN EXCELLENT JOB OF KEEPING EOPLE FROM WORKING. HEY TAKE OUR STICKS AND PUT HOLES IN OUR BUCKETS.
ASK GIULIANI WHERE HE'S GOING TO FIND WORK FOR 15,000 CITY WORKERS HE'S LAYING OFF!
BILL, A PANHANDLER:
THE SQUEEGEE IS JUST A GIMMICK I DON'T NEED. BUT THE INCREASED POLICE PRESSURE HAS PUT A SHADOW ON THINGS.
RAY, A FISH SALESMAN:
IF THEY DO IT RIGHT, SQUEEGEEING IS AN EXAMPLE OF THE AMERICAN FREE-ENTERPRISE SYSTEM. I KNOW SOME SQUEEGEE GUYS WHO NOW HAVE THEIR OWN CAR-WASHING BUSINESS IN BROOKLYN.
LUCIO, A DISHWASHER:
I NEVER WASHED WINDSHIELDS. MY BROTHER JESUS GOT ME THIS JOB.

Korean point of view," Mr. Linton told us. "It was clear he was agitated."

What happened over the next half hour was remarkable for what was not said, Mr. Linton continued. No one used the word "nuclear," because that would have been far too direct. There was no negotiation of issues, at least in a Western sense. It was "two old men bantering," Mr. Linton said. "Kim Il Sung was shaking his fist for emphasis, and his voice was very loud and emotional. Dr. Graham talked about the pressure that forced President Clinton to be less flexible. He said, 'He's doing the best he can, under the circumstances.' Kim Il Sung listened very intently and nodded his head in understanding—not that he agreed on everything. I got the feeling that he did not understand the intricacies of our political system. What he did react to was the idea that the President was sincere."

All the talk, according to Mr. Linton, was purposely vague, couched in the kind of wording that Dr. Graham had used at a banquet two days before, when he said that President Clinton "represents a new generation of Americans." This, Mr. Linton explained, was a polite way for one old man to tell another old man that they were dealing with a young man, and that young men can sometimes be brash. It was also "a character reference for a young United States Administration," Mr. Linton went on. "He provided an explanation for the U.S. position in a way that made sense to an old village elder like Kim Il Sung."

The meeting ended without a handshake or a commitment but with what Mr. Linton, a particularly astute observer of Koreans, regarded as an acceptable way out of a crisis for President Kim—who, several weeks later, did formally agree to grant the international inspectors access to the nuclear sites. "It provided a motive for allowing the inspections that didn't hurt Kim Il Sung's pride," he said. "It made it more a favor that he was bestowing than a concession that had been wrung out of him."

President Kim and Dr. Graham (and Mr. Linton) retired for lunch. They talked of their childhoods, Mr. Linton said. President Kim told Mr. Graham that his mother, a devout Christian, took him to church all the time. But he did not like church, President Kim added. He liked fishing better.

LIFE CLASS, SORT OF

When Mary McFadden saw Lucian Freud's "And the Bridegroom"—that's the painting, at the Metropolitan Museum, of a naked man and a naked woman stretched out on a bed, not dealing with each other—she had a thought. It was not: God, are these people miserable! It was not: That guy is huge! It was not: Have these people been beat up by somebody? And it definitely was not: This is one painter I'd rather not run into, thank you very much. No, it was: I want him to paint me. That's what she told her friends, and last week—after we heard about this, and phoned her—that's what she told us. In fact, she went further. She said she would love a portrait of her like the one at the Met—you know, on a bed, naked, lying next to someone, lying next to "a friend."

Ms. McFadden had made inquiries, she said, but had not actually spoken with Mr. Freud. We decided to make an inquiry ourself, and called Bill Acquavella, who is Mr. Freud's dealer here. He said, "It's a crazy idea." We asked him if we could get in touch with Mr. Freud in London, and he said that that was a crazy idea, too. Was the problem that Ms. McFadden is so—well, *social*? Or did it have to do, in her case, with there being—in the bluish-gray, welt-red fold-upon-fold Freudian flesh department—not so much to work with? No, Mr. Acquavella told us, the problem was that "Lucian selects his own subjects."

When we broke the news to Ms. McFadden, she took it well. She said she still thought Mr. Freud was a great painter. She said she thought he might come around. "You never know," she said. "He gambles a lot. He might need money."

Really?

O.K., Ms. McFadden acknowledged, maybe Mr. Freud wasn't going to be motivated by money. Rather, he was going to be shown photographs of Ms. McFadden and her friend, or eventually recall being shown them, and he was going to recognize that they—that is, Ms. McFadden and her friend—were "aesthetically his type." ♦

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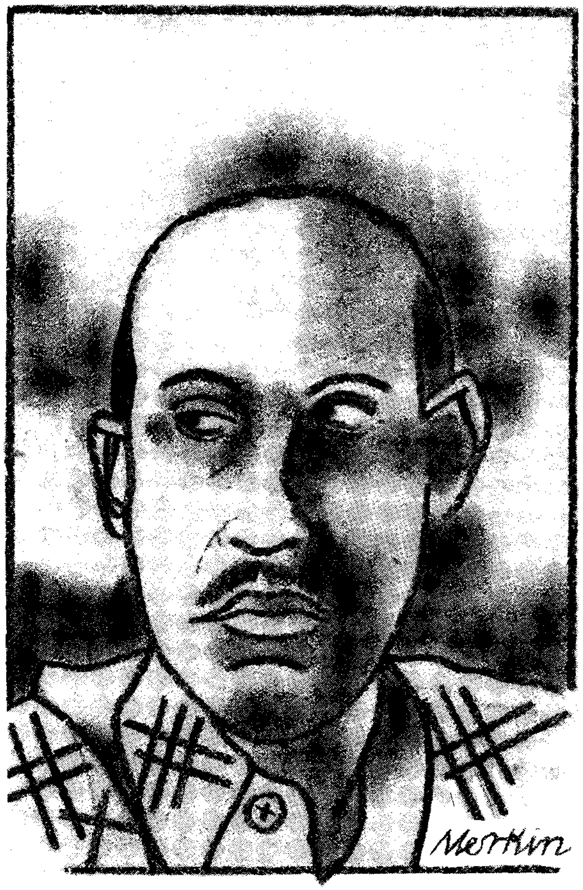
LIFE AND LETTERS

VISIBLE MAN

While the literary world awaits a second novel from Ralph Ellison, now eighty, his early work is once again in the forefront of black intellectual debate.

BY DAVID REMNICK



Ellison's "Invisible Man" predates the civil-rights movement, the drama of Malcolm X, and the rise of Afrocentrism, and yet it anticipates, or answers, all of these.

RICHARD MERKIN

IN a modest apartment overlooking the Hudson, at the weld of northern Harlem and southern Washington Heights, Ralph Ellison confronts his "work in progress." He has been at this for nearly forty years, and rare is the day that he does not doubt his progress. He wakes early, goes out to buy a paper on Broadway, returns, and, when he has exhausted the possibilities of the *Times* and the "Today" show, when the coffee and the toast are gone, he flicks on the computer in his study and reads the passage he finished the day before. "The hardest part of the morning is that first hour, just getting the rhythm," Ellison says. "So much depends on continuity. I'll go back to get a sense of its rhythm and see what it will suggest, and go on from there. But very often I'll start in the morning by looking back at the work from the day before and it ain't worth a damn." When that happens, as it does more frequently than he would like, Ellison will turn away and stare out the window, watching the river flow.

Ralph Ellison turned eighty on March 1st, and his peculiarly modern burden, the burden of a second act, grows heavier with age. The man is far too composed, too regal, to betray the weight of it, but the soul must weary of its persistence. So great was the celebration in 1952 for his first (and only) novel, "Invisible Man," that the sound of critical applause, rattling medals, and whispered expectations took years to fade. Few novels have ever entered the canon so quickly. Ellison won the National Book Award, the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the Chevalier de l'Ordre des Artes et Lettres, a place in the American Academy of Arts and Letters, and a position at New York University as Albert Schweitzer Professor of Humanities. Here and there, critics' and readers' polls would declare "Invisible Man" the greatest American novel of the postwar period or of the century. Ellison's rite-of-passage novel absorbed everything from black folklore to Dostoyevski's "Notes from Underground," creating something entirely new, lasting, and American. It was translated into seventeen languages, and the Modern Library produced an edition. But at the end of all this lingered the nervous, American question: What's next?

Ellison did not intend to distinguish his career with such an austerity of publication. By 1955, he had begun a novel set mainly in the South and in Washington, D.C. At the center of the story—as far as we know it from a few published extracts—are the community and the language of the black church and the relationship between a black preacher and a friend who eventually becomes a senator and a notorious racist. After a few years of writing, Ellison was not shy about showing excerpts to friends like Saul Bellow and the novelist and cultural historian Albert Murray. He was not reluctant to publish a piece here and there in literary quarterlies.

For a while, expectations for the book soared. "I shared a house with Ralph in the late fifties in Tivoli, New York, along the Hudson in Dutchess County," Bellow says. "At that time, he was hard at work on the book, and he let me read a considerable portion of it—a couple of hundred pages, at least, as I remember. We were running a magazine at the time called *The Noble Savage*, and we published an excerpt of Ralph's manuscript called 'Cadillac Flambé.' But all of it was marvellous stuff, easily on a level with 'Invisible Man.' "

A couple of weeks before his birthday, I called on Ellison at his home. The apartment is lined and stacked with books. Here and there are African sculptures and piles of papers, mostly correspondence. As he and his wife, Fanny, showed me around, a small cloud of cigar smoke still hovered over his computer in the study. Slender and graceful, with the courtly elegance of his friend Duke Ellington, Ellison looks fifteen years younger than he is; a man of old-fashioned Southern grace, he is polite in the high style, careful in conversation almost to the point of deliberate, if ironic, dullness. I said that his friends have often remarked on the gap in style between the turbulence of "Invisible Man" and the reserve of its author.

"Well, one inherits a style from the people one grows up with," Ellison said, referring to his childhood in Oklahoma, which was segregated at the time but had never been a slave state. He studied composition at Booker T. Washington's Tuskegee Institute, in Macon County, Alabama—and was the intellectual star of his class—before coming to New York, in 1937. "I am rather passionate about some of the inequities that are part of the country," he went on. "But why should a writer be different? No one asks a surgeon to be different. He has to be a surgeon first. He has to know the techniques and traditions of surgery. That's how I approach writing. I would do the same thing if I were an opera singer. Black opera singers have to master the tradition. We all have at least double identities."

For a while, Ellison skated amiably, and elliptically, around various questions of the day, but when the subject turned to his work in progress, the book that Bellow had remembered so vividly, the one that Albert Murray used to hear Ellison read aloud from, he seemed, at first, a little startled. Then, as he described a fire two decades ago at his old summer house, in Plainfield, Massachusetts, he slumped back in his chair, resigned, his voice lowering into a growly whisper. "There was, of course, a traumatic event involved with the book," he began. "We lost a summer house and, with it, a good part of the novel. It wasn't the entire manuscript, but it was over three hundred and sixty pages. There was no copy. We had stayed up in the country into November, in the Berkshires. We went to do some shopping and came back and the house was burning. An electrical failure. And, being in the country with a little volunteer fire department—well, they were off fighting another fire and didn't make it. They never got it put out. It all burned down. They came and tried, but in the country it's difficult to get water, especially there."

Ellison's friends say that it was years before he went back to work on the novel; some say three or four, others five or six. Albert Murray, who lives across town, off Lenox Avenue, and has known Ellison since they were students together at Tuskegee, had told me, "Ralph was just devastated. He just closed in on himself for a long time. He didn't see anyone or go anywhere. At a certain point, you knew not to say much about it. A wall, Ralph's reserve, went up all around him." Ellison was reduced to trying to summon up his novel from memory or from the memories of those who had read it or heard him read it.

When I asked Ellison how much time he lost, he was quiet for a while, and then he said, in a tone that suggested we were talking about someone else and the question was merely *interesting*, "You know, I'm not sure. It's kind of blurred for me. But the novel has got my attention now. I work every day, so there will be something very soon. After the fire, I had certain notes here in the city and a pretty good idea of where I wanted to go. Snatches of it had been published. And I did a lot of teaching after that. Let's say I was disoriented, but I worked on it. I don't know how long the interruption was. Maybe four or five years. It wasn't as if I weren't working. I was trying to reimagine the situation. The characters are the same and the mixture of language is the same. But nuances are different. After all, when I write I am discovering things. One development suggests another, a phrase will reveal things. You just try to get through it.

"Letting go of the book is difficult, because I'm so uncertain. I want it to be of quality. With 'Invisible Man,' I wasn't all that certain, but I had friends like Stanley Edgar Hyman, who worked on *The New Yorker*, and who was invaluable to me. There's a photograph of Stanley reading 'Invisible Man' in Francis Steegmuller's office. I'll always remember: he looked up at me and said, 'Say, this thing is funny!' When you are younger, you are so eager to be published. I am eager to publish this book. That's why I stay here, and not in the country. I'm eager to finish it and see how it turns out."

ELLISON'S readers can be greedy and hope for more novels and essays—come to think of it, a memoir would be nice, too—but what's done is done and, in a sense, is more than enough. On the occasion of his eightieth birthday, it becomes clearer than ever that "Invisible Man" and his two collections of essays, "Shadow and Act" (1964) and "Going to the Territory" (1986), are the urtexts for a loose coalition of black American intellectuals who represent an integrationist vision of the country's history and culture. Ellison's books are a foundation for talents as various as the novelists Charles Johnson, John Edgar Wideman, Leon Forrest, and James Alan McPherson; the critics Shelby Steele, Henry Louis Gates, Jr., and Stanley Crouch; the poet Michael S. Harper. When Johnson, for instance, received the National Book Award, in 1990, for his novel "Middle Passage," he devoted his entire acceptance speech to a celebration of Ellison. Johnson said he hoped that the nineteen-nineties would see the emergence of a "black American fiction" that takes Ellison as its inspiration, "one that enables us as a people—as a culture—to move from narrow complaint to broad celebration."

The publication of "Invisible Man" predates the civil-rights movement of the nineteen-sixties, the drama of Malcolm X, and the rise of Afrocentrism, and yet it anticipates, or answers, all of these. The demagogic figure of Ras the Destroyer in the novel is based, no doubt, on Marcus Garvey, but it turns out to be a prescient depiction of the Farrakhans to come. The lancing portrait of the Brotherhood was modelled on the Communist Party of the nineteen-thirties, but it stands for all the doctrinaire utopianism and fakery to come. The metaphor of the paint factory and the mixing of black paint into white anticipates a sane multiculturalism, a vision of American culture as an inextricable blend. Unlike so much fiction labelled somehow as ethnic, "Invisible Man" is a universal novel. From the first lines to the very last ("Who knows but that, on the lower frequencies, I speak for you?"), it insists on the widest possible audience.

In Ellison's view, America is not made up of separate, free-floating cultures but, rather, of a constant interplay and exchange. In the essays, he describes slaves on a Southern plantation watching white people dance and then transforming those European steps into something that is American; he speaks of what Ella Fitzgerald has done with the songs of Rodgers and Hart, what white rock bands did with the blues; he watches the black kids in Harlem in their baggy hip-hop gear walking down Broadway, and on the same day he sees white suburban kids on television affecting the same style. What Ellison has called the "interchange, appropriation, and integration" of American culture is evident in the music we hear, the games we play, the books we read, the clothes we wear, the food we eat. For him, integration is not merely an aspiration but a given, a fact of cultural and political life. Without pity or excessive pride, Ellison also sketches the facts of his own life—especially his self-discovery, first through music, then literature—to describe the American phenomenon. "Invisible Man" itself looks not only to the experience of Ralph Ellison at Tuskegee Institute or in Harlem but to Ralph Ellison in the library, the young reader that Albert Murray remembers as "always looking to the top shelf." When Ellison finally came to New York, Richard Wright and Langston Hughes became literary mentors and friends, but their influence was secondary, following a youthful tear through Eliot, Pound, Faulkner, Hemingway, Stein, and Dostoyevski. Out of many, one.

Ellison's vision of American life and culture has not always sat well with critics, black or white. For the Black Arts Movement of the nineteen-sixties and seventies, "Invisible Man" and its author lacked the necessary rage. Amiri Baraka (LeRoi Jones) and other nationalists denounced Ellison from platform after platform. And that had its wounding effect, especially in the academy.

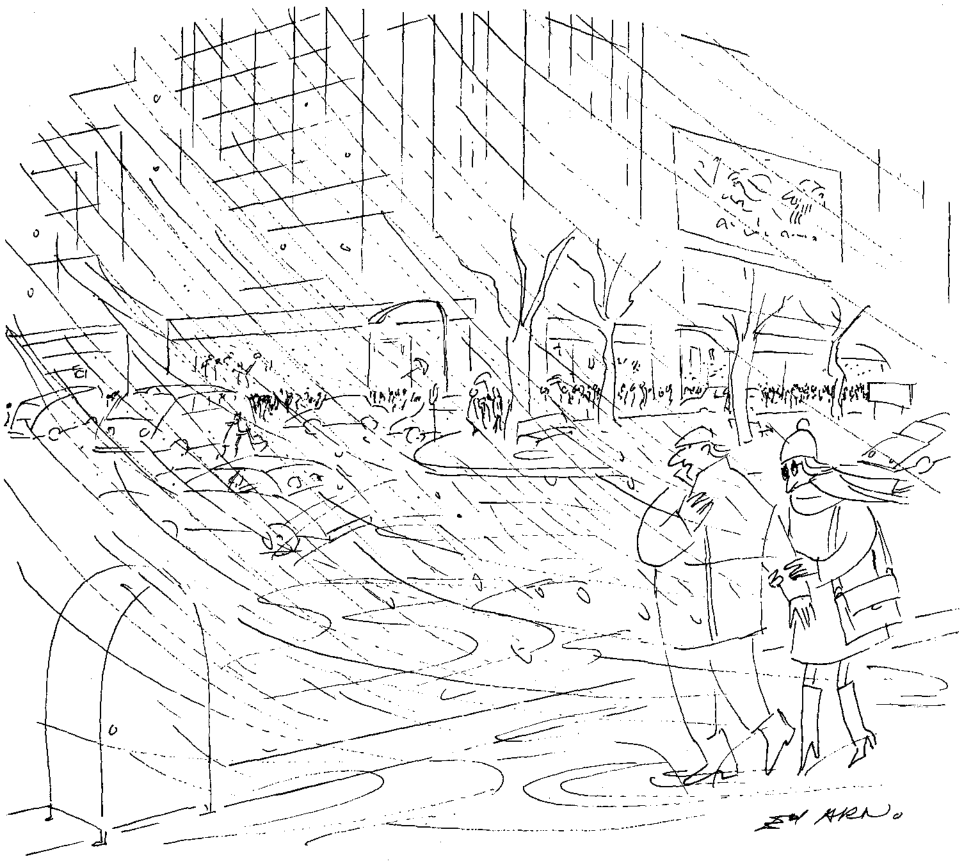
In 1969, Charles Johnson dropped by the library at Southern Illinois University's new black-studies program. "Where can I find a copy of 'Invisible Man'?" he asked the librarian.

"We don't carry it," came the answer.

"Really? Why not?"

"Because Ralph Ellison is not a black writer," the librarian said.

An extreme example, no doubt, but it suggests the climate of the time. "When Ellison got an award in 1965 for the best novel since the Second World War, people were still under the sway of the vision that came from Martin Luther King," Stanley Crouch, the author of "Notes of a Hanging Judge," told me. "Once the black-power separatist agenda came along, and once white people showed that they preferred some kind of sadomasochistic rhetorical ritual to anything serious, Ellison's position began to lose ground. That's been the central problem in Afro-American affairs since the black-power-cum-Marxist vision took over the discussion. We have had to deal with one or another intellectual fast-food version of that these last twenty-five years or so.



"If it isn't raining, it's snowing, or the sun is shining, or something. That's New York."

What it comes down to is that Ellison perceives Afro-American history in terms of the grand sweep of American life, not in terms of sheer victimhood. And that has been very difficult in the wake of the whole Malcolm X, 'You didn't land at Plymouth Rock, Plymouth Rock landed on you' thing."

"Let's face it," Henry Louis Gates, Jr., the chairman of the Afro-American studies program at Harvard, said. "Ellison was shut out, and Richard Wright was elected godfather of the Black Arts Movement of the nineteen-sixties, because Wright's hero in 'Native Son,' Bigger Thomas, cuts off a white girl's head and stuffs her in a furnace. For Ellison, the revolutionary political act was not separation; it was the staking of a claim for the Negro in the construction of an honestly public American culture. Wright's real message was not that different, but no one wanted to see that."

The resistance to Ellison's vision was by no means limited to black critics. In "Black Boys and Native Sons," an essay published in *Dissent*, Irving Howe adopted a strangely patronizing tone to celebrate Richard Wright's authenticity and to reprimand James Baldwin and Ellison for failing to possess a similar sense of rage. Howe declared himself astonished by "the apparent freedom ["Invisible Man"] displays from the ideological and emotional penalties suffered by Negroes in this country."

Ellison's passionate reply, "The World and the Jug," was published in *The New Leader*, and can be read as a manifesto, a defense of his vision and art, and of the life that created them:

> Evidently Howe feels that unrelieved suffering is the only "real" Negro experience, and that the true Negro writer must be ferocious. But there is also an American Negro tradition which teaches one to deflect racial provocation and to master and contain pain. It is a tradition which abhors as obscene any trading on one's own anguish for gain and sympathy; which springs not from a desire to deny the harshness of existence but from a will to deal with it as men at their best have always done. . . . It would seem to me, therefore, that the question of how the "sociology of his existence" presses upon a Negro writer's work depends upon how much of his life the individual writer is able to transform into art. What moves a writer to eloquence is less meaningful than what he makes of it. . . . One unfamiliar with what Howe stands for would get the impression that when he looks at a Negro he sees not a human being but an abstract embodiment of living hell. He seems never to have considered that

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American Negro life (and here he is encouraged by certain Negro "spokesmen") is, for the Negro who must live it, not only a burden (and not always that) but also a discipline.

Ellison's answer to Howe was, in a sense, an elaboration of the first paragraph of "Invisible Man," with the hero's demand to be seen as himself, as "flesh and bone, fiber and liquids—and I might even be said to possess a mind." The mind of Ellison has been deeply influential. Even if Leonard Jeffries and Molefi Kete Asante have been successful in imposing dubious Afrocentric programs on the City College of New York and Temple University, even if such ideas have trickled into school systems as far-flung as Portland's and Atlanta's, Ellison's godchildren have been at least as influential in stating their case. His integrationist position has shaped black-studies programs at Harvard, Princeton, Yale, Stanford, and many other leading universities.

"Ellison grants blacks their uniqueness without separating us from the larger culture," Shelby Steele, the author of "The Content of Our Character," said. "After reading Ellison, you realize that talk of a 'white culture' or 'black culture' is simplification. In the academy, identity politics is often the thing, and people would prefer to deal with finite categories: 'black culture,' 'white culture,' 'Hispanic culture,' and so on. Nationalist politics gets more attention, because it's more flamboyant, more glamorous, more controversial. It's better press. But the vast majority of black people in this country are not nationalist. My sense of the problem has to do with the nature of black politics, an oppression-based politics since the nineteen-sixties. People like me, who believe that there are some difficulties of black life that are not the result of oppression, are just branded conservatives, no matter what the range of opinion."

Stanley Crouch sees the ambivalence toward Ellison as a symptom of the separatist drift represented by Ras the Destroyer. "Ellison knew a long time ago what the dangers were," Crouch said. "All the dangers are in 'Invisible Man.' The dangers of demagoguery. The dangers of trying to hold up a rational position in a country that can become hysterical about race, from either side. You see, the race hysteria that was dominated by white people for the bulk of time Afro-Americans have been in America was overtaken by the black-power-, Malcolm X-derived, pro-Louis Farrakhan, anti-American, romantic Third World stuff that came up in the sixties. You had thugs, like Huey Newton, who were celebrated as great revolutionaries. You had West Indians, like Stokely Carmichael, who were calling for the violent overthrow of the country. You had LeRoi Jones ranting anti-Semitism from one coast to the other, and black students on campus cheering and howling. And that's going on now. If people had paid more attention to what Ellison had to say in 1952, we might have got beyond some of the stuff we're in."

Leon Forrest, a black novelist Ellison took time to praise in our meeting, told me, "Ralph goes back to a fundamental tradition in African-American life. He's what we used to call a race man. Areas that seem conservative, supporting businesses in the community, respecting the workingman, the family—that's part of it. A race man means you're in a barbershop conversation, and there might be a nationalist, an N.A.A.C.P. man, whatever, but they're all concerned with getting African-Americans ahead in the community. I know Ralph had a lot of respect for many of the things Adam Clayton Powell stood for at first, the way Powell broke the back of Tammany Hall, though not the shrill things he said at the end of his life. Ralph is for a robust onslaught against racism but, at the same time, for building within the race. What's happened is that there hasn't been enough building within the race: our families, our businesses, the inner strength of the people.

"What disappoints him today is that not enough black Americans are learning from the possibilities of the book. We don't read enough. His own literature is informed by a vast library, and yet we are cutting ourselves off from that. You've got a problem in Afro-American society these days: if a woman has a niece and a nephew, she'll give the niece a copy of a Toni Morrison book and take the nephew to the Bulls game. We don't do nearly enough to enrich our kids in the middle class in our body of literature—the body that fashioned Ralph Ellison's imagination and scholarship."

SIXTEEN friends and associates gathered on March 1st at Le Périgord, on the East Side, to celebrate Ralph Waldo Ellison's birth. Once the food and not a little wine had been consumed, Albert Murray, by way of toasting his friend, recalled his youthful admiration for Ellison as the smartest, and smartest-dressed, upperclassman at Tuskegee. It was, of course, impressive to Murray that Ellison always seemed to check out the best books in the library, but it was at least as daunting for him to set eyes on the nascent elegance of Ellison, a slender concertmaster in his two-tone shoes, bow tie, contrasting slacks, and whatever else the best haberdasher in Oklahoma had to offer. "I even remember the poetry Ralph wrote," Murray said. " 'Death is nothing, / Life is nothing, / How beautiful these two nothings!' "

"Thanks for remembering so much," Ellison said, smiling and rising to his feet. All evening long, he had been reminiscing at the table, about his friends in jazz, his ill-advised attempt to play the trumpet not long ago in the presence of Wynton Marsalis, his pleasure in everything from the poems of Robinson Jeffers to the liturgy of the black Episcopal church. And then, turning to Murray, he said, "Isn't it interesting and worth a bit of thought that from Booker T. Washington's school, which was supposed to instruct youngsters in a vocation, two reasonably literate writers emerged? Isn't that just part of the unexpectedness of the American experience? It behooves us to keep a close eye on this process of Americanness. My grandparents were slaves. See how short a time it's been? I grew up reading Twain and then, after all those Aunt Jemima roles, those Stepin Fetchit roles, roles with their own subtleties, here comes this voice from Mississippi, William Faulkner. It just goes to show that you can't be Southern without being black, and you can't be a black Southerner without being white. Think of L.B.J. Think of Hugo Black. There are a lot of subtleties based on race that we *will* ourselves not to perceive, but at our peril. The truth is that the quality of Americanness, that thing the kids invariably give voice to, will always come out." And to that everyone raised a glass. ♦

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LETTER FROM BERLIN

SECRETS OF THE FILES

Historians and Nazi-hunters are sounding an alarm over Washington's decision to return control of the primary archive of Third Reich personnel records to Germany.

BY GERALD POSNER

THE sadism of Amon Göth has been memorably recorded in "Schindler's List," almost fifty years after he was hanged for the atrocities that he committed while he was the commandant of the Plaszów concentration camp, in southern Poland. But long before Göth was portrayed as a pathological killer in Keneally's and Spielberg's works on the Holocaust he was remembered by means of a unique and invaluable historical monument known as the Berlin Document Center. There, in original papers maintained in a half-inch-thick file, Göth's role as an S.S. officer and a faithful and talented foot soldier of the Third Reich is preserved. The dossier includes a rare photograph, in profile, of Göth, who stood six feet four: it is a classic, brooding portrait of a low-level hood, whose dark hair is greased back, and who is wearing a black shirt with a bright checked tie. The file reveals the extent of his attraction to Nazism—Viennese-born, he joined a Nazi youth group at seventeen, moved to a nationalist paramilitary group at nineteen, and, in 1930, when he was twenty-two, joined the then outlawed Austrian Nazi Party. He was designated No. 510,964, and in the same year he joined the S.S. (No. 43,673).

The indisputable record of Göth's wartime assignments led to his conviction and execution in postwar Poland. The information available in Göth's personnel file, like that of millions of other Nazis, was captured, intact, by Allied forces at the end of the Second World War and placed under American protection in an underground complex that had once housed Field Marshal Hermann Göring's surveillance headquarters. The complex, in the heart of Berlin, was rechristened the Berlin Document Center, and for the last forty-nine years it has been controlled and administered by the United States; time and again, it has proved its value as a critical investigative and research aid to Nazi-hunters, scholars, historians, and governments. The B.D.C. first came to prominence in the Nuremberg trials of 1945 through 1949; it was also called upon during the de-Nazification proceedings of the same period; and it has provided necessary corroboration—often including artifacts such as handwriting samples and photographs—in thousands of legal cases since. Perhaps the most celebrated part it played was in the case of Josef Mengele, the Auschwitz doctor who had fled to South America at the war's end. In 1985—the only time that a B.D.C. file was ever allowed to be removed—the Mengele file was carried by courier to Brazil, and medical information in it was used by forensic experts there to aid in positively identifying his corpse. Earlier, when well-founded suspicions arose concerning the concealed Nazi pasts of West Germany's President Heinrich Lübke and Chancellor Kurt Georg Kiesinger, the B.D.C. provided conclusive proof.

The B.D.C.'s dramatic ability to unmask former Nazi participants who have gained political and cultural power in the postwar world has made it the source of a certain amount of criticism and a great deal of uneasiness in Germany. However, with the passage of time, the center's strength in the investigative and prosecutorial arena is being slowly overtaken by its importance as a historical record for scholars of the period; in fact, with an estimated seventy-five million pages of files, it is the world's foremost repository of primary Nazi personnel documents. With the creation of the B.D.C., captured records were largely reorganized into biographical files, so that all a petitioner would need to get information was a name and often a birthdate. (There are at least three Amon Göths.) In 1993 alone, the B.D.C. carried out twenty thousand name checks at the request of researchers. Some files would provide the person's

Nazi Party and S.S. membership numbers, the name of his or her unit, place of operations, and duties. Although access is restricted to what the B.D.C. deems "serious researchers and scholars," the center's directors have tended to apply that standard broadly, and, once access is granted, no restrictions are placed on what can be studied. "It is a unique archive that allows historians to explain the mentality of the people who played important roles in the Third Reich," Serge Klarsfeld, the Paris-based attorney and Nazi-hunter, told me. "For many historians, studies of the Nazi period would not have been possible without it."

In a move that has attracted virtually no media attention in the United States or Germany, the B.D.C. is now about to be given a new guardian. On October 18th, after decades of argument and deliberation over who should control the B.D.C., the State Department agreed to relinquish jurisdiction over it to the Germans this coming July. A number of factors contributed to the decision, ranging from the political consequences of Germany's reunification to a devastating series of thefts of B.D.C. documents in recent years, which the Germans persuasively ascribed to American negligence. The official line on the changeover is that the American presence is no longer needed, and also that at this juncture a foreign power as supervisor constitutes an indignity to the German people. In any case, as a safeguard, the agreement states that the American caretakers will depart with a microfilm copy of the complete contents of the archives.

To many scholars familiar with the B.D.C.'s documents, the merits of the changeover are questionable. They fear that the transfer agreement, which is three pages long, was executed in haste and will ultimately prove to have been ill conceived, with disastrous consequences for Nazi-hunters and historians alike.

"Why are we giving up these documents?" Elan Steinberg, the executive director of the World Jewish Congress, said. "These documents were paid for in the most expensive commodity of all—the blood of young American and Allied soldiers. We purchased them. We own them. The effort by the Germans to rush through their return is clearly mixed into the question of forgetting about the Holocaust."

"It is not enough to know, or to wish to know, everything possible about the victims," I was told by the Nobel Peace Prize winner Elie Wiesel, who is a frequent critic of German policies on Holocaust issues. "We must also try to know as much as possible about the killers. The document center deals with motivation, possibilities, and 'achievement.' All available information must be insured so it will not be curtailed or hidden in any way. That is why the documents should have remained in the hands of the Americans."

Steinberg, Wiesel, and others are concerned that the Americans' microfilm copy of the collection will be compromised—that, on the one hand, it is being made too quickly to maintain fundamental legibility and reliability standards and that, on the other, it will not be immediately available after the changeover occurs. It appears that they may have good reason to worry—potential problems have been identified, some of them having to do with the speed at which the project is being conducted. And once the National Archives, in Washington, receives the master copy, it will take, at a minimum, two years to complete a users' copy for researchers.

As to the future of the originals, they are concerned that German privacy laws, which are much stricter than American ones, could make many files simply inaccessible.

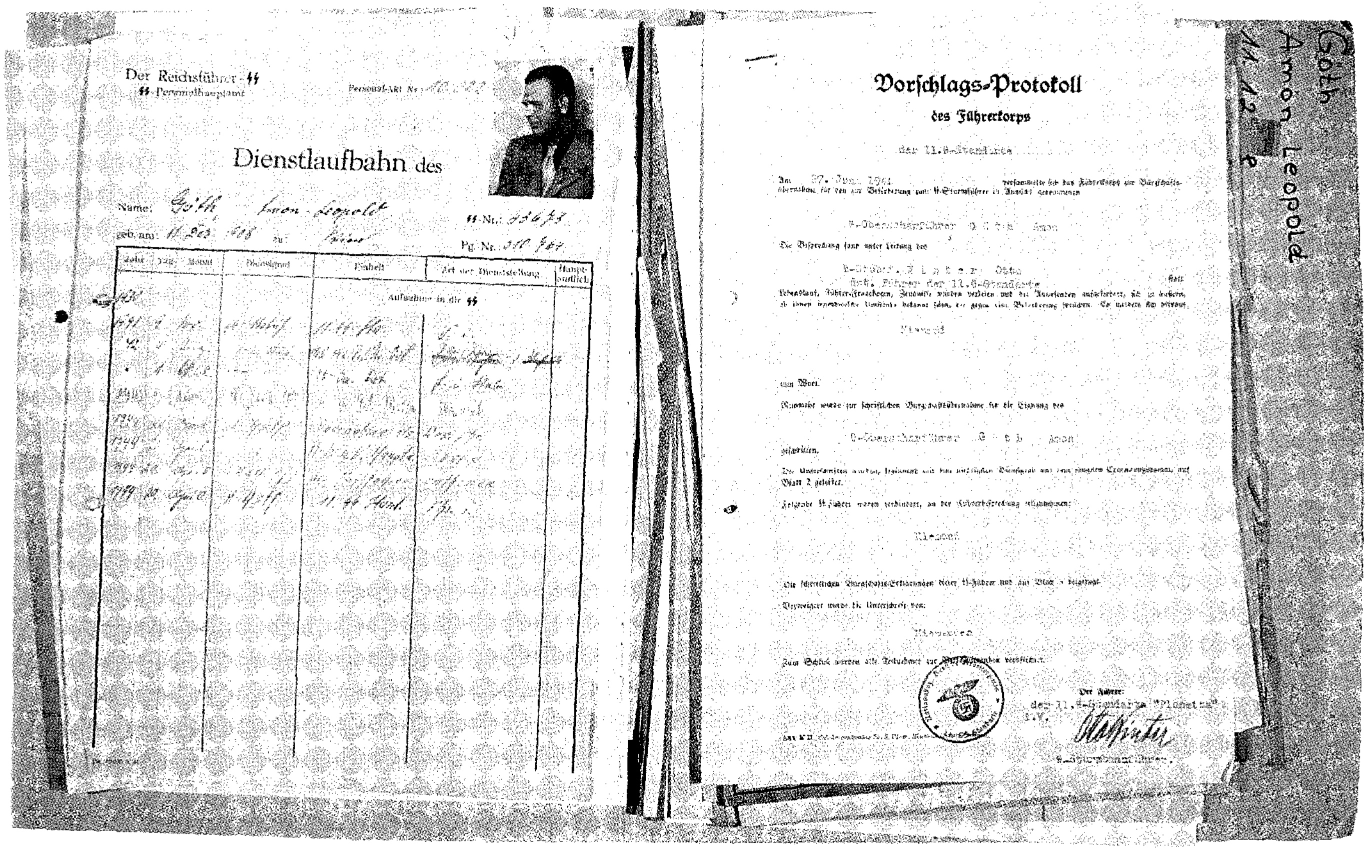
MUCH of the information in Amon Göth's dossier is, as its formulators intended it to be, "personal." As in every S.S. file, there is a *Lebenslauf*, or autobiographical statement. Göth's is two pages long and, in neat handwriting, indicates that he abandoned the teachings of the Catholic Church, risked imprisonment to join the Nazis, and fled to Germany when he was pursued by Austrian authorities for "crimes involving explosives." Göth wrote that his commitment to National Socialism was "paramount." His superior officers admired his devotion, gave him glowing personal evaluations ("He has the right attitude and shows a completely agreeable disposition and nature"), and transferred him to the S.S. and police services (noncommissioned posts) in 1942. The only blemishes on his record were that his racial classification was not the highest (it was noted that he had "eastern" features) and that he and his wife did not receive Nazi Party commendations such as were given couples who produced a large family. Their only child, a son, was born in 1939 and died of unexplained causes less than a year later. (A nephew, named Gerd Honsik, survives; a virulent Austrian anti-Semite, he has been convicted of fourteen violations of Austrian law for neo-Nazi activity, including making speeches and publishing a magazine denying the Holocaust—crimes in Austria and Germany—and is currently a fugitive in Spain.) Göth was a model officer, and his reward was a posting, in August, 1942, with Aktion Reinhard, the S.S. operation to liquidate more than two million Polish Jews. He was dispatched to Lublin, the center of the bloodbath, and his file, although it does not illuminate his duties there, records that he emerged with a promotion and more responsibilities inside the Waffen S.S. His posting as commandant at Plaszów was his career zenith; it is there that "Schindler's List" observes him standing bare-chested on the balcony of his villa, nonchalantly using the prisoners below for target practice (a penchant testified to by numerous Plaszów survivors). The original change-of-address card noting Göth's move to Plaszów, which was then a *Zwangsarbeitslager*, or forced-labor camp, is also in his file.

I inspected Göth's dossier, among others, during a recent visit to the Berlin Document Center, which is situated in the vast woods called the Grunewald, only a short subway ride from the center of Berlin. It still has the look of a secret Nazi installation, which is to say that the approach is entirely innocuous. Just as in the days when it was Göring's eavesdropping headquarters, all you see at first is a quiet cul-de-sac, with a row of whitewashed houses (which served as wartime homes for an S.S. unit) along one side and an alpine-style house at the end. Göring outfitted the complex to house an élite, multilingual staff, which monitored telephone calls and spied on Germans who were considered threats to the Reich.

I was greeted at the B.D.C.'s front gate by a slender, youthful-looking forty-two-year-old American named David Marwell, who has been at the B.D.C. since 1988, and its director since 1989. Before that, he was chief of investigative research for the Justice Department's Office of Special Investigations, which is better known as the American Nazi-hunting unit. Marwell is a historian by training, and he is Jewish. "I savor the irony that I am the custodian of these files," he told me. An armed military policeman took my passport, and Marwell guided me through a series of locked doors. The atmosphere inside was that of a secure military facility: surveillance cameras, touch-sensitive and motion-detecting alarms, and original, subterranean escape hatches that are lined now with state-of-the-art contact alarms. "The B.D.C. currently has fifty German employees and only three Americans," Marwell said. "That is about the same ratio that existed in the nineteen-fifties, when we had several hundred employees."

He unlocked another door, and we entered a room that had a large metal safe in one corner. He quickly turned the combination lock of the safe, swung the door open, and pulled out a clear plastic folder. Inside was a slightly browned single sheet of paper bearing a list of signatures. "This is one of the most significant pieces of paper in the collection," he said, and he pointed to the sixth line. It was a bold signature, simply "Hitler." "This is from a 1919 meeting of the predecessor of the Nazi Party, the German Workers' Party—D.A.P. Hitler attended the meeting, and this is the sign-up sheet they had at the door. That night, he gave a talk that was so mesmerizing to those in the beer hall that it led to his eventually taking over the Party." We proceeded into a large chamber that contained the files of the Reich's Immigration Central Office, which provided confirmation of the Nazis' classification of human beings into "superior" and "inferior" racial classes and also confirmation of various attempts to "Germanize" the conquered "inferior" eastern territories. In two adjoining rooms were the original files of the Nazi Party Supreme Court and of the Volksgerichtshof, or People's Court, where the Reich's laws were enforced. Another large room contained eleven million cards belonging to perhaps seven million Nazi Party members, believed to be about ninety per cent of the total membership. The cards were found by the United States Seventh Army, in April of 1945, at a paper mill near Munich, where they had been sent for pulping. They are still in their original wooden file cabinets. A smaller set of cabinets in the same room contained records of people who were barred from Party membership. Opening a drawer, I withdrew two samples. One was the record of a young man who had been accused of masturbating at the age of fourteen, the other that of a man who had allowed himself to be treated by a Jewish physician.

Then I went back to the Party-membership cabinets and sought out the rows for the letter "S." Amon Göth's file was waiting for me in Marwell's office, but I wanted to see Oskar Schindler's original Party card. Near the back of one drawer I found it—a faded four-by-seven-inch blue card on which his date of birth, April 28, 1908, was typed. The card revealed that Schindler had applied for Party membership on February 10, 1939 (Member No. 6,421,477), in the Sudetenland, stayed there until April, 1941, and then moved to the Nazis' General Government in Kraków. It was there



Der Reichsführer-SS
SS-Personalhauptamt

Dienstlaufbahn des

Name:

geb. am:

SS-Nr.:

Pg. Nr.:

Aufnahme in die SS

Vorſchlags-Protokoll

des Führerkorps

Göth
Amon Leopold

The Berlin Document Center's dossier on Amon Göth, the commandant of the Plaszów concentration camp, contains a rare photograph and entries charting his rise through the ranks of the S.S.

J.P. BOENING/ZENIT

that he crossed paths with Göth. "There are some interesting differences between the two men that you can pick up just by looking at the dates they joined the Nazi Party," Marwell observed. "Göth was a very early member and was affiliated with the Party when it was still illegal in Austria. Low-number followers were inevitably the true believers; you had nothing to gain by joining the Nazi Party when it was out of power and was deemed a fringe group. But by the time Schindler joined the Party it was getting a lot of opportunists—it was clear that being a Party member might boost your business or social standing. It was this fear, that people would join for non-ideological reasons, which eventually led the Nazis to close off membership."

We now descended into Göring's catacombs, two stories below ground level, and passed through a massive blastproof door. Inside was a very wide central hall, nearly the length of a football field, with three small passageways branching off from it. The walls, of concrete, were several feet thick, and the only air was provided by small vents. Fluorescent tubes cast a slightly greenish light on shelved stacks of files, some of them rising as high as ten feet. Here was Göring's own file, and Mengele's, and that of Heinrich Himmler, the head of the S.S. The breadth and magnitude of the paper stored in this hall and the surrounding tunnels is physically overwhelming. One is quite literally confronted with the tremendous bureaucracy that drove the Third Reich, and jarred by the disturbing equilibrium of the records, which make no distinction between advances in methods of extermination and ordinary, mundane tasks. Over the years, I had reviewed many personal accounts by Nazis, such as the diary of Josef Kramer, an S.S. physician, at the museum at Auschwitz: "SEPT. 6: Today, an excellent Sunday dinner; tomato soup, one half of chicken with potatoes and red cabbage, and magnificent vanilla ice cream. . . . In the evening at 8:00 attended another special action outdoors"—927 French Jews were selected for gassing.

Here, in stack after stack, I found the institutional corollary to accounts such as Kramer's: Here was Himmler, in the midst of organizing the Final Solution, devoting hundreds of hours to meticulous expense sheets. At Auschwitz, which had its own traffic lights and regulations, the S.S. was taking Mengele to traffic court for having run his motorcycle at a high speed into a truck. In April of 1935, about the time Joseph Göbbels was helping to frame the Nuremberg racial laws, he was planning the seating arrangement for his wedding; the bride was to sit next to the Führer.

We walked past the files of the S.S. members, who numbered more than six hundred thousand; of the S.A.; and the papers for the Chamber of Culture, the propaganda arm of the Reich. Then we went back upstairs to the Nazi-membership-file room, to a bank of cabinets labelled "Chamber of Physicians." "Seeing the physicians' files reminds me of the day you had Karl Brandt's son visit the B.D.C.," Marwell said. He was referring to an incident that resulted from a book of interviews I had done with eleven children of prominent Nazis. I had told all of them that their fathers' original records were available for viewing at the B.D.C. Two—Karl Brandt, Jr., the only son of Dr. Karl Brandt, Hitler's physician, and Niklas Frank, the younger son of Hans Frank, the governor-general of Poland—had gone to see the files. "As coincidence would have it, they both arrived on the same day, not knowing who the other was, although their fathers were almost certainly acquainted," Marwell recalled. "They sat at two tables, less than ten feet apart—the sons of two men who had been among the most powerful in the Reich. And both of those men were hanged by the Allies. Almost fifty years later, the sons made a pilgrimage here to learn more about their fathers. That was an unusual day."

IN another underground security chamber, the largest microfilming project of its kind ever attempted is under way. Thirteen women sit at camera stations, each routinely reaching for a sheet of paper stacked on her right, adjusting it on a surface in front of her, waiting for the camera's click, removing the paper to the left, and reaching for the next one. In 1968, the B.D.C. began microfilming its collection, with the notion that the United States might at some point relinquish control to the Germans, but then halted the project in 1972. At various times, Germany cited a United States congressional provision, in effect since the late nineteen-forties, for returning captured war records once they had been microfilmed, and contended that a transfer was long overdue. In the end, however, Germany prevailed not because of American policy but because of the discovery of a major internal theft operation, whose participants were said to have stolen more than ten thousand documents in the nineteen-eighties. (Many believe the number was as high as forty thousand.) Marwell, who was appointed after the thefts were exposed, said that about four thousand documents were later recovered. One B.D.C. employee, named Alfred Darko, who was the chief of the photography unit, was convicted in the thefts and was sentenced to twenty-eight months in jail. Three auction-house owners were given probation and fined, and seven memorabilia dealers were fined.

The disclosure of the thefts, in 1988, on the eve of the fall of the Berlin Wall, made the Germans' case all the stronger. To Berliners, the B.D.C. was one of the most visible vestiges of the Allied Occupation, and after reunification its fate came to the forefront. In 1989, the Bundestag passed a unanimous resolution requesting that the files be transferred immediately. At that point, the State Department, represented by various negotiators, began working in earnest with German representatives on last October's agreement.

Critics of the agreement are dismayed that the United States was willing to execute it while knowing that the Germans had not always honored previous agreements concerning captured war records. When the original personnel files of the wartime German Foreign Ministry were returned to German custody, between 1956 and 1958, it was thought unnecessary to make copies, because the documents were subject to a treaty insuring that Germany would grant "scholars access at all times." Yet for thirty-three years—until 1989—the German Foreign Ministry ignored the treaty and blocked access to the files. "It was equal-opportunity lawbreaking," according to Gerhard Weinberg, a prominent Third Reich historian whose most recent book is "A World at Arms: A Global History of World War II." "They didn't let anyone, including German historians, have access." It is also well known that in the past the Bundesarchiv—the German federal-archive system, which is headquartered in Koblenz—has authorized the destruction of Third Reich documents. Officials have said that B.D.C. documents will not be destroyed, but the transfer agreement provides no such guarantee. "Archivists are the wrong people to determine if something is historically important," I was told by Geoffrey Giles, a University of Florida history professor and the chairman of the German Studies Association's archive committee, a watchdog group of eminent historians. "Some of the German files that have been destroyed in the past as useless are now considered to have been quite important."

In the eyes of Elan Steinberg, of the World Jewish Congress, the system that has been in place at the B.D.C. since 1945 could not be improved on. "From both a scholarly and a criminal-investigative viewpoint, it was the best possible arrangement. We should have kept the originals and given the copies to the Germans. I was actually surprised by their insistence that they get the originals, and even more surprised by our easy acquiescence in it. Now it appears that all our worst fears are true."

Among the "worst fears" that Steinberg refers to is the impossibility of preserving the special characteristics of certain originals on microfilm copies. On many Third Reich documents, the colors of handwritten jottings in the margins provide the clue to who wrote them. (Himmler, for instance, always used a green pencil.) But colors are not reproduced on microfilm. Another problem is that many of the early Nazi Party cards, issued between 1925 and 1933, have dark-blue ink on a bluish background. "They are difficult to read on the originals, and almost impossible on a copy," I was told by William Brustein, a professor of sociology at the University of Minnesota, whose study of Nazi Party demographics, made during the nineteen-eighties, was the largest research project ever undertaken at the B.D.C. (It will be published next year, as a book called "The Logic of Evil.") There is the further complication that some Party-membership dossiers include six different cards; it is important to read them in the order in which they were originally attached, but often the cards within a file have become separated. Brustein, who worked with thousands of such cards during his multi-year study, recalled, "Only by matching up a staple mark or seeing how a card is separated along the edge can a researcher put the cards together in a single file. With film, you can't see these types of physical marks, and it means you can't match them up at all."

Other problematic documents include faint original carbons and fragile papers that were partially burned in Nazi attempts to destroy them at the war's end.

In order to meet the July deadline the filming project has been forced to move forward at a rapid pace. With fifty-five million originals to get through (twenty million were microfilmed in an earlier phase of the project), the B.D.C.'s thirteen microfilmers are copying some fifty thousand documents, in a seven-and-a-half-hour workday, which averages almost nine copies per minute per person. The workers charged with this responsibility are not professionally trained in the nuances of microfilming, or even in

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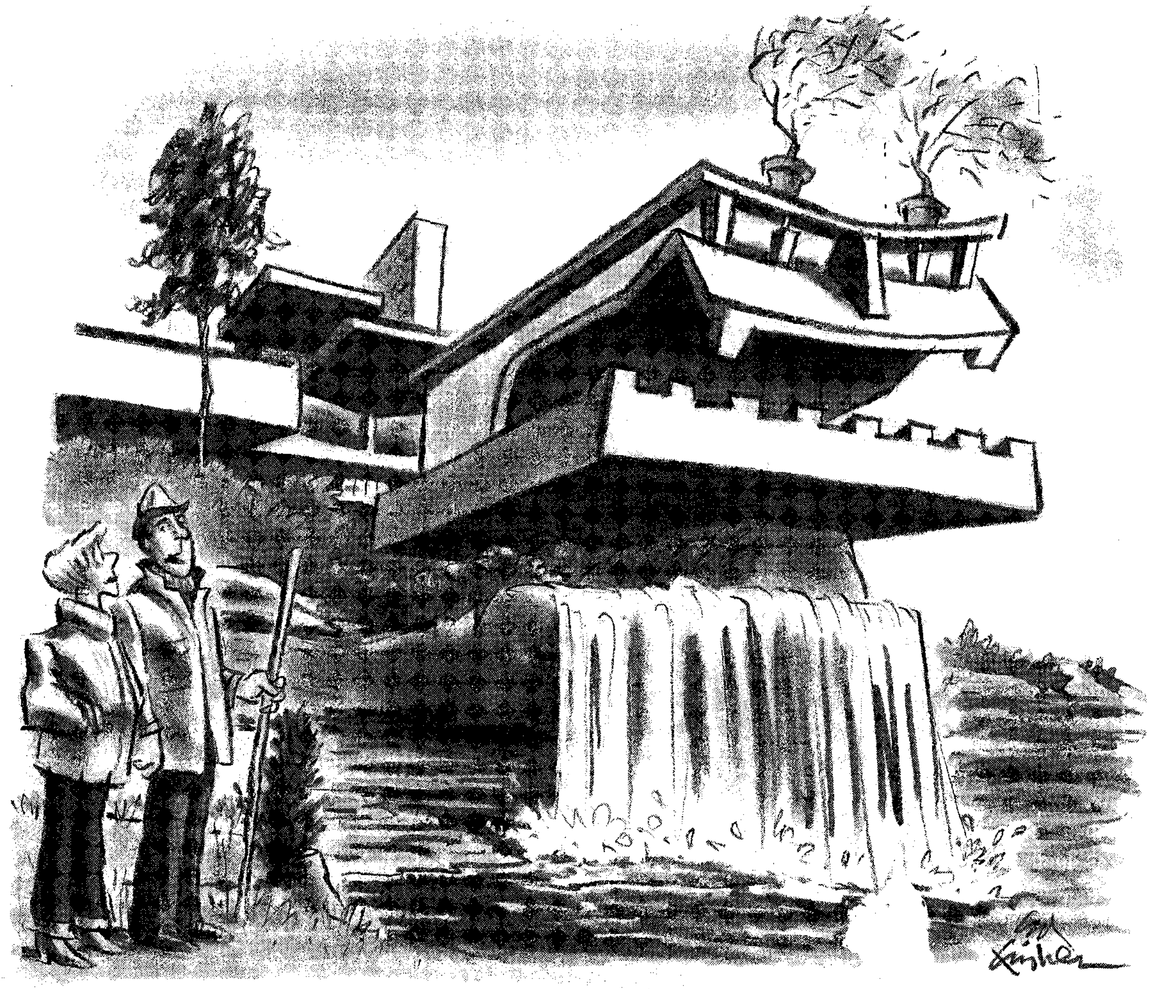


"The story is that Wright was going through considerable domestic difficulties at the time he designed this one."

• •

handling historical documents, nor do they inspect the papers as they place them on the copying surface. Moreover, while the B.D.C.'s computer program can determine that a file has been taken for microfilming, it cannot determine whether the documents in a given file have been copied completely or correctly. In fact, it cannot determine whether they have been copied at all.

EQUALLY worrisome to some scholars are the strict German privacy laws, which will cover the original B.D.C. files, once they become integrated into the Bundesarchiv. A stringent 1988 law, known as the *Bundesarchivgesetz*, restricts access to federal archives, and privacy considerations (legal doctrine that was first codified in 1977 as *Datenschutz*—and rewritten in 1991) often mean either that records are not released or that restrictions are applied to documents, such as the blacking out of names or other personal information.

In 1992, Germany passed a special law regarding the files of the Stasi, the internal spy network of the former East Germany. That law abrogated many of the standard privacy restrictions and opened the files to all victims of Stasi monitoring. Oddly, however, the German government has steadfastly refused to consider a similar access law for Nazi documents. Even the fact of a war-crimes conviction is irrelevant under the *Bundesarchivgesetz*. Access to a file is not permitted in most cases until the person in question has been dead for thirty years, and the law empowers archivists to extend that protection for an additional thirty years "insofar as this is in the public interest." If the death of the person cannot be established, the file is closed for a hundred and ten years from the person's birth. Very personal information is generally restricted for eighty years from the date of the document's preparation. All of this means that, except for those files pertaining to Nazis executed immediately after the war, the original personnel files of the Third Reich could be severely restricted as of July.

German archivists have other powers, too: They can—and often do—demand to know the purpose of a document-search request before determining whether the material should be made available. Any document can be withheld by archivists, regardless of the time elapsed, if its use "jeopardizes" the welfare of Germany, is at odds with the "legitimate concerns of third persons," threatens the preservation of the original document, causes administrative work "which cannot be justified," or impinges on any German secrecy laws. The privacy restrictions offered under the *Bundesarchivgesetz* are so great that even personal portions of Mengele's file might be sanitized.

"The restrictions in the law, coupled with the level of discretion granted to the archivist, worries me," Michael Kater, a historian at York University, in Toronto, who is the author of numerous works on the Third Reich, told me. He recalled a recent incident in which he was blocked from consulting records because of a concern for the privacy of heirs. "I was in a private German archive, and I wanted to look at letters of a musician who was actually a victim of the Nazis and had since died," he said. "The archivist said to me, 'Well, here are the letters. We know that the person who wrote these letters is dead, so you can see them on that count, but the person, or the heirs of the person, to whom they were addressed also have a right. Heirs on both sides—the heirs of the musician, and the heirs of the addressee—have privacy rights.' I was not permitted to use these letters in my work."

"There are many recent horror stories about restrictive access to files in German archives on an arbitrary basis," Geoffrey Giles, of the German Studies Association, told me. "That's our great fear—that researchers won't be able to get to the files." He added, "The Germans have never been very keen on encouraging research on the Third Reich."

A German archivist recently provided me with an account of how one research request involving a privacy concern was handled. A German researcher approached the Bundesarchiv seeking information about the deceased father of two brothers, both of whom are Bundestag legislators. Their father had been a member of the S.S. until 1936. After interviewing the researcher, the archivist got in touch with the sons and asked if they felt comfortable about having the information on their father released. Both said no. The archivist then went back to the researcher and asked why he was seeking the information. The researcher replied that he was conducting a history of one of the German political parties. The archivist decided that the documents were unnecessary to the project and declined to provide them.

In other recent cases involving federal and state archives, privacy concerns have been used to prevent the publication of the last names of Jewish victims deported from Düsseldorf; to block the access of survivors to records of Nazi persecution of Gypsies; to curtail information in files about the Third Reich's official policy toward alcoholics; and to prevent publication of the last names of Nazis involved in various crimes.

I was told by Sybil Milton, the senior historian of the United States Holocaust Research Institute, that Alfred Streim, one of Germany's leading prosecutors of Nazi crimes, complained recently that he had received documents from the Bundesarchiv, including name lists, which had some information and names blacked out. (Streim did not respond to my request for an interview.)

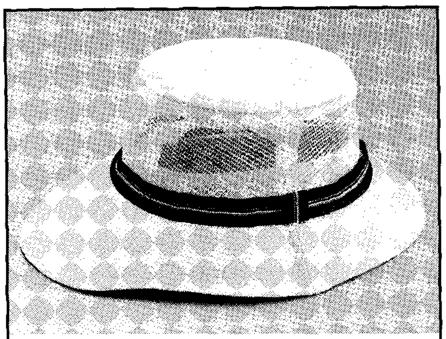
The privacy issue also worries Nazi-hunters like Elliot Welles, the associate director for European affairs of the Anti-Defamation League. "I am a little worried, a little upset, and a little uneasy about how this will work, because Germans always say privacy, privacy, privacy," he said.

The German authorities who will be responsible for the B.D.C. after its transfer discount much of the criticism. Dr. Klaus Oldenhage, a senior Bundesarchiv official who has long been interested in the B.D.C. files, maintains that German laws allow access to historical information without infringing on rights of privacy. "It's not that difficult," he told me. "For instance, if *Der Spiegel* wants to do a good, general war-crimes article, then it can have all the documents it wants. If it wants to do an article about a particular action that took place in a single village during the war, then it can get the information, but no names. And if all it wants to do is go out and expose someone as having a Nazi past or a Nazi parent, then the answer is 'I'm so sorry, but no.' "

Dr. Siegfried Büttner, the vice-president of the Bundesarchiv, took the same view. "We must be concerned about personal data, especially when it comes to celebrities, and issues that could affect their private lives," he told me. "As for those who were lower-ranked officers, there are sometimes private problems to address. But if the request for documents is indispensable for scholarly research an exception can always be made. The law provides considerable discretion in these cases."

The kind of information that might be withheld under the privacy laws has in the past created public scandal. When a London researcher got his hands on the B.D.C.'s Nazi and S.S. file on Baron Günther von Reibnitz, the father of Princess Michael of Kent, the British tabloid press had a banner week; and the same thing happened internationally when the magazine *Spy* published a copy of the Nazi Party card of Arnold Schwarzenegger's father.

However, the disinclination to open certain files could potentially impede the work of serious investigators and Nazi-hunters. Elliot Welles, of the A.D.L., used the open-access proviso of the B.D.C. to obtain a copy of the S.S. file on Franz Pein, who in the nineteen-eighties was the Austrian Ambassador to Germany and then to Australia, and was later an Austrian represen-



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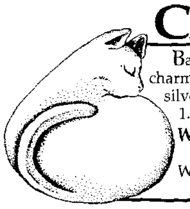

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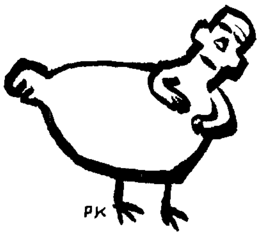
tative to UNESCO, in Paris. Welles's efforts eventually forced Pein to take an early retirement, in 1988. At the Austrian mission to the United Nations, in New York, "they kept telling me he was a 'little' Nazi," Welles said. "There's no such thing as a little Nazi. Without his original file, you could never prove the case against him."

In a similar instance, last year, the World Jewish Congress used B.D.C. files to prove that Dr. Hans-Joachim Sewering, the president-elect of the World Medical Association, was a former member of the S.S. The file on Sewering also revealed that, in 1943, when he was a doctor at a clinic for the handicapped near Munich, he signed an order sending a retarded girl to a euthanasia center. Sewering protested that he did not know that euthanasia was being practiced there at that time, but he resigned under pressure.



Nazi-hunters fear that under the German privacy laws, access to both Pein's and Sewering's B.D.C. files could have been prohibited.

THE German archivist who will replace David Marwell and become the first German director of the B.D.C. is Dr. Dieter Krüger, a Bundesarchiv archivist who has overseen an important collection of Nazi personnel files in Dahlwitz-Hoppegarten. "I am bound by the law and must protect the privacy of the person for thirty years after his death," Krüger told me. "I will sometimes have to reject access to original documents. I don't think you can separate access to documents from the use of access to the documents. I believe that this law is the right approach." As to specific examples of how he might apply privacy restrictions, "if a researcher is interested in a serious treatment of the past, then that is fine," he said. But, he went on, his definition of "serious" would not necessarily permit naming names. "If someone is interested only in finding out whether a politician was a Party member, then that is not historically useful. On the other hand, if someone signed an order to do something, such as an execution order, that would not be protected. But if the question involved a *Volksgerichtshof* case [Nazi judicial proceeding], then I might have problems. Maybe the person who filed the complaint was unreliable, and, if I believed that, to release the information might affect the accused man or his family." Krüger was adamant that he did "not want to be a bottleneck for serious research," and that it was "not my ideal to always hold back the information." He added, however, that any American researcher who requests access to original B.D.C. documents in the future "must demonstrate why the microfilm is not adequate for his purposes," and that "if there is not a serious need for the original, then they should use the microfilm." (Because of concerns about immediate access, Neal Sher, the former director of the Justice Department's Office of Special Investigations, insisted that the transfer agreement guarantee American prosecutors the right to obtain B.D.C. originals "expeditiously." Non-government researchers will not be accorded the same privileges, however.)

Perhaps the most significant indicator of Germany's plans for the B.D.C. surfaced in another conversation I had with Krüger. Almost in passing, he mentioned that the archive would probably be reorganized—that the new regime might do away with the system established by the Americans and restore the filing system created by the Nazis. "You must understand that the B.D.C. arranged its files under biographical headings, so that if you gave a name you would get the information on that person," Krüger said. "That is fine for investigators but not for historians. In the future, we will try to reconstruct the links and connections between the documents. It is important that the documents be restored to their original provenance."

As part of this reorganization, files might be dispersed to regional archives. A codicil to the October agreement requires the Germans to consult with United States authorities before moving the collection at the B.D.C. However, from my conversations with Krüger, Büttner, and Oldenhage I gained the clear impression that they interpret "consultation" as requiring Germany only to inform the United States of what it intends to do with the documents, and that the decision is not contingent upon American consent. "All you need to do is check the agreement," Oldenhage told me. "It transfers 'title and control' to the Federal Republic of Germany."

Krüger acknowledged that restoring the files to their original order was an enormous undertaking and could take five to ten years. (Historians, Michael Kater said, are concerned that "it provides the authorities with another pretext for saying, 'I'm sorry, but this material is not available for researchers.' ") Büttner said that no final decision on the reorganization had been made. Oldenhage told me that he thought the reorganization would take place, and he went on to say that eventually the B.D.C. facility itself might be closed, "although not in the near future, in part because of the sensitivity of this issue to the Americans."

THERE was a flurry of activity at the eleventh hour surrounding the B.D.C.-transfer agreement. Richard Holbrooke, the United States Ambassador to Germany, told me that he had first learned of the pending agreement soon after he assumed his post in late September and that he'd had second thoughts about it. He placed the agreement on hold shortly before it was to be executed, and sought the opinions of several historians and prominent Jewish leaders, including Michael Berenbaum, the director of the United States Holocaust Research Institute, a division of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. Berenbaum checked around and responded to the Ambassador that the transfer seemed sound. Recently, Holbrooke had his staff investigate some of the concerns raised since then, including the fact that no provision was made to guarantee access to the original documents while the National Archives labors to make a users' set of the microfilm. Holbrooke's policy adviser, Dan Hamilton, said last week that, after reviewing the matter, "there are, as far as I can tell, no major problems here."

It appears that the National Archives may make the users' microfilm available in stages, as it is copied. But Berenbaum, who told me that he had never seen a draft of the transfer agreement, said last week that until all copies are available in Washington the originals should remain accessible, according to the traditional B.D.C. rules. "It would be a shame to lose access to material, especially when scholarship is burgeoning," he said.

Brewster Chamberlin, the director of archives at the Holocaust Research Institute, who was one of those whose counsel Berenbaum had sought before responding to Holbrooke, said that at the time, "as long as we had the copies fully accessible in Washington I didn't foresee a problem." Knowing now that a complete users' copy is several years away, Chamberlin concurs that "it would have been better to wait until the film was ready before giving the documents back."

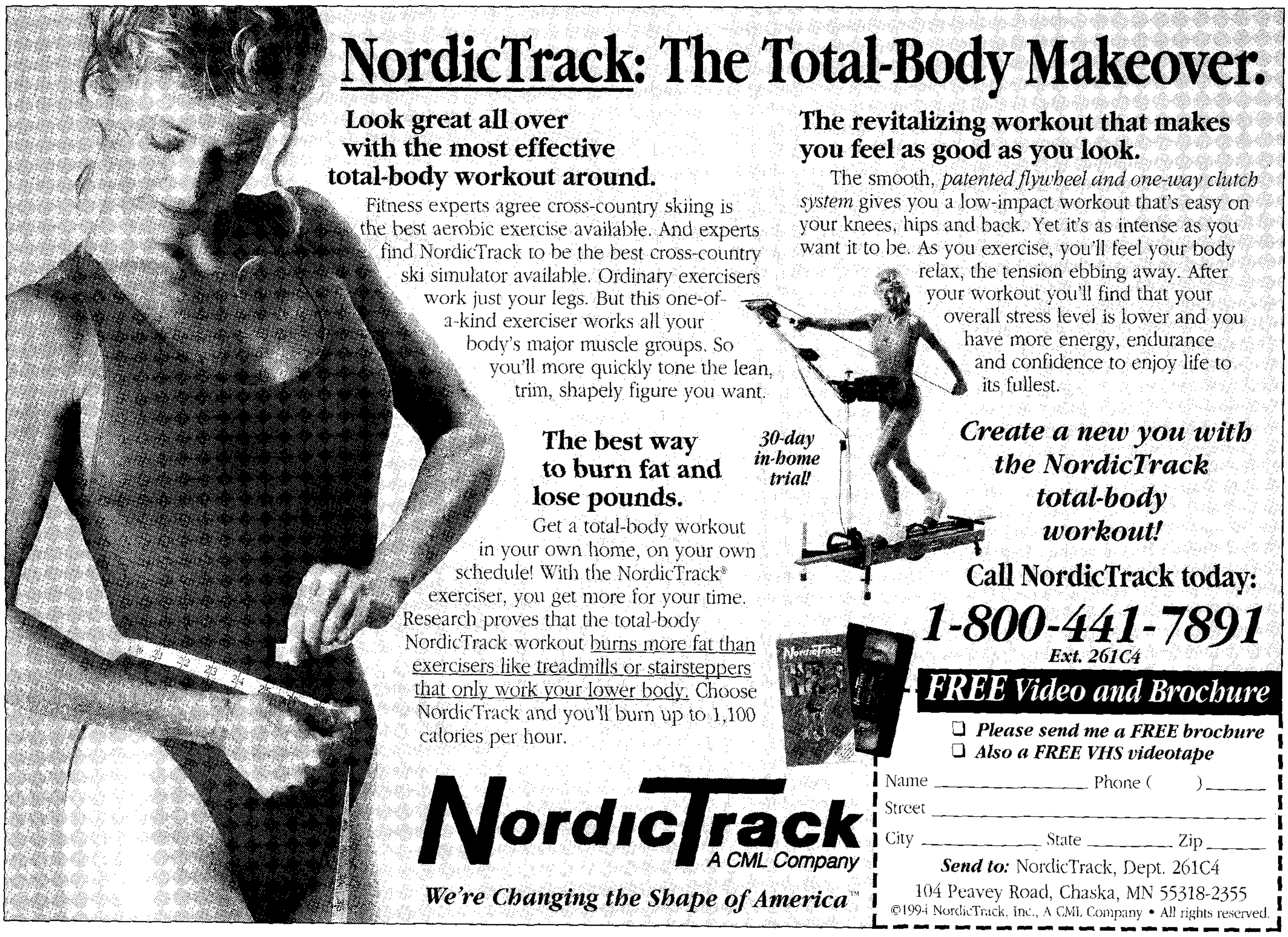
An American source familiar with the B.D.C. negotiations told me that the timing of the turnover had been hotly contested, and that the State Department negotiators had in fact wanted to maintain custody until a users' set was available. The Germans balked, however, because Washington could not tell them precisely how long it would take to make such a copy, and the Americans backed down. Fritz Stern, a Columbia University history professor, who was in Bonn last fall as senior adviser to the embassy, told me, "We soon realized that it was impossible to reopen negotiations that had been going on for a very long time."

Some scholars and activists claim, however, that they raised concerns when there was still time to influence the outcome, and were ignored. "We at the World Jewish Congress had publicly complained since 1990 about the potential problems with this transfer, and no one in the State Department ever paid us any heed," Elan Steinberg told me. "We arranged for a senior-level delegation, headed by the president, Edgar Bronfman, to visit the B.D.C. We called a press conference to alert the general public to this issue. After that, no responsible official could claim he didn't know about our concern."

WHEN I returned from Berlin, I met with Elliot Welles, of the A.D.L., in his New York office, overlooking the United Nations. He talked about several cases that he was still pursuing, with the help of the B.D.C. files, including one that concerned a man still living in Europe—a former S.S. officer who had selected Welles's mother for execution in the Riga ghetto. "I was fourteen when they killed her. I lost every family member I had in the war," he said. He stopped for a moment, bit his lip, and looked out the office window. Then, seemingly talking more to himself than to me, he said, "We should have kept the B.D.C. We should have insisted that it be open always, for anyone who wanted to go there."

"The hunt for Nazi criminals is biologically finishing," Simon Wiesenthal, the world's preëminent Nazi-hunter, said. "The survivors are dying. The murderers are dying. There are only a few years left for justice here, and why is it now that the center is returned? Germany feels strong and wants it back? That's not enough.

"The document center is very important because if you are looking up whether somebody is a Nazi, you can see the whole development of that man, what he says in his own words in his autobiography—those papers simply don't allow people to lie in later years. Those documents are a holy matter." ♦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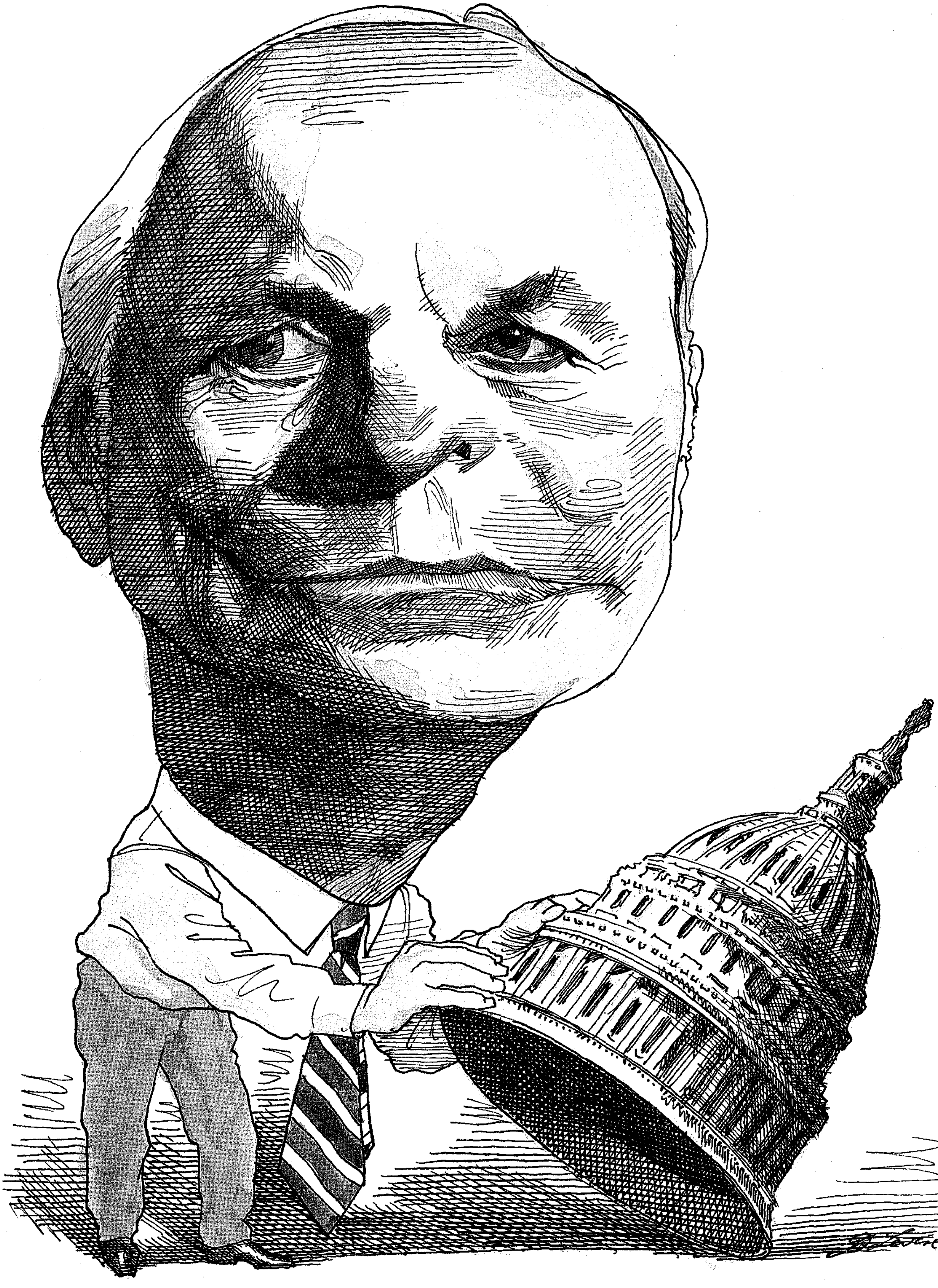


ANNALS OF THE MEDIA

THE ANTI-NETWORK

Brian Lamb and C-SPAN let the news reveal itself—without staging, stars, or sound bites. While mainstream TV news has become increasingly high-cost and down-market, over the last fifteen years C-SPAN has altered the nature of politics and is setting a new tone for a diversifying industry.

BY JAMES LARDNER

To think of TV news these days is to think of NBC proving that a General Motors pickup truck will explode on impact if you shoot flames at the gas tank; of ABC finding the means (when the networks have all but given up on documentaries) to do an hour-long special and five segments of "PrimeTime Live" on the Menendez case; and of CBS stationing Connie Chung (and her "CBS Evening News" anchor desk) in Portland for two weeks while she pursued her "exclusive network interview" with Tonya Harding. It is enough to make an old network-news loyalist weep, as Dan Rather nearly did during an industry conclave last September, when he took his colleagues and himself to task for allowing "this great instrument, this resource, this weapon for good, to be squandered and cheapened." And then you catch sight of the Cable Satellite Public Affairs Network.

"What is this doing on my TV set?" is a question that enters the mind of a viewer who has just made the leap. C-SPAN, as it is commonly known, is TV news without stars, computer graphics, or throbbing music (to say nothing of commercial interruptions), and its idea of a hot story is welfare reform. There are actually two networks: C-SPAN, which carries the House of Representatives, and C-SPAN2, which carries the Senate—when those bodies are in session. The rest of the time, the programming on both C-SPANs consists of speeches, symposia, and press conferences (presented, as a rule, in their entirety, down to the last burp), and of interviews, call-in shows, and strange, Warholian studies of people and institutions having some connection with the great enterprise of government—two hours, say, of the new American Ambassador to Mexico, James R. Jones, and his wife, Olivia, arriving in Mexico City, making their first official inspection of the Embassy, and scrutinizing a vast hall known as "the barn," where hundreds of Mexican nationals have come to apply for visas. (Mrs. Jones: "Sometimes the lines actually go into the street?" Consul-General: "Oh, sometimes the lines go one, two, three blocks down, another block, and in back of the Embassy again." Mrs. Jones: "It gets pretty warm in here." Punctilious Aide: "It certainly can be in summer.")

No other network, perhaps, has done so little to call attention to itself. And yet, fifteen years after its launching, C-SPAN is in sixty million homes; millions of Americans watch it regularly (its known fans include Bill Clinton, Mario Cuomo, Rush Limbaugh, and Barbra Streisand); it has been parodied by "Saturday Night Live" and David Letterman; and, in its low-intensity way, it has changed both television and politics.

C-SPAN watchers are the kind of people who give money to politicians they like, and send angry Mailgrams to ones they don't like; and they are no less fervent in their commitment to the network itself. On the call-in shows—a regular weekday feature—it is common for people of widely differing political orientations to pause, like members of rival gangs who worship at the same church, for a brief "Thank you for C-SPAN" before launching into the not so polite main body of their remarks.

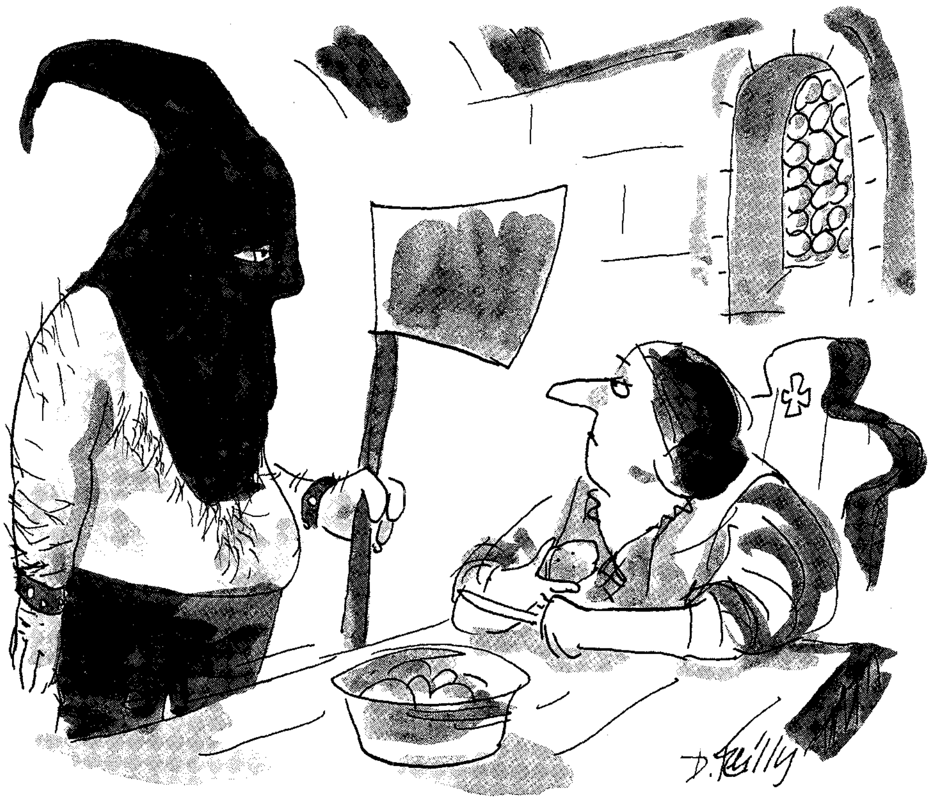
The recipient of the thanks, often, is a man in his early fifties, on the short side, with thinning silvery hair, a moonlike face, bright blue eyes, and a wide mouth, which on these occasions curves into a measured smile—the only expression of on-air emotion he permits himself. Brian Lamb, who usually handles the Monday- and Friday-morning call-ins, and also a Sunday-night author-interview show called "Booknotes," is one of the network's most engaging oddities. There is something monkish about his appearance, and he practices an austere brand of reporting and interviewing. He doesn't chat. He doesn't philosophize. Just when everyone in journalism has agreed that objectivity is a snare and a delusion, Lamb refuses to convey the slightest hint of his own views, or even whether he has any.

Lamb has been criticized in print for not "challenging" people; indeed, that is one of his trademarks. He didn't press the writer Christopher Hitchens when, appearing on "Booknotes" to discuss a collection of his essays, he denounced Mother Teresa as someone who is "forever on some scumbag's Learjet going around cashing in on everyone else's belief that she's a saint." Nor, in an interview shown later the same evening, did Lamb question President Clinton when he spoke of his great admiration for Mother Teresa. Which portrayal to believe? Lamb, listening with the same stony detachment to both men, was no help.

Just when you have forgotten that Lamb is there, however, he has a habit of reappearing with a question that nobody else would have thought to ask. "Have you read all that?" he inquired after President Clinton described an impressive bunch of books on a side table in the Oval Office. (The answer seemed to be not exactly, or not yet, although Clinton moved on so briskly to a discussion of other books and other activities that it was hard to be sure.)

Within the community of "C-SPAN junkies," as viewers tend to call themselves, Lamb has developed a follow-

DAVID LEVINE



"The king says no dice on the gift-and-souvenir-shop concept."

• •

ing—a sort of cult of impersonality. "I sit here morning after morning trying to figure out if you're a Republican or a Democrat," a woman from New Hampshire announced after reaching him on a call-in show a few months ago. "Really? Oh," Lamb replied. Like one of those laconic Western heroes who deliberately settle down in places where nobody knows them, Lamb attracts attention by his nonpursuit of it. He has never done a "standup" outside the White House or the Capitol. He has never jockeyed with the President at a White House press conference. In fifteen years as a TV journalist covering Washington, he has never spoken his own name on the air. Nor has he bothered to mention that in addition to his on-camera duties he is C-SPAN's chairman and chief executive officer and the man who thought up the idea for the network in the first place.

LIKE Brian Lamb the host-interviewer, Brian Lamb the chairman of C-SPAN can generally be found wearing a charcoal suit, a striped tie, and an impeccably pressed white shirt. In temperament, though, the two Lambs are easy to keep straight. The host stays rooted to his chair. The chairman likes to walk around and can sometimes be seen karate-chopping the air as he roams the halls. The host is a man of few words. The chairman is rather chatty. The host is all but unflappable. The chairman is capable of getting riled up.

A subject much on Lamb's mind at present is the recent decision of the Federal Communications Commission—implementing the Cable Television Consumer Protection and Competition Act of 1992—to cut cable rates by about seven per cent, having already taken a bite out of the industry's revenues through a complex set of "must carry" rules that give broadcast stations the right to claim access to cable systems. Lamb sees this series of actions as a "baffling" and "incredibly punitive" assault on cable TV, just when "true competition was at the doorstep" in the form of new satellite and telephone-wire delivery systems and a vast expansion of the cable universe through fibre optics and digitization. C-SPAN is a nonprofit service that gets its financing in fees from cable systems around the country, and it has suffered, according to Lamb, both indirectly, because of the "tremendous bitterness" of the industry and the conviction of its "good people" that their public-spiritedness has gone unappreciated by Congress, and more directly, through the must-carry rules, which have created a channel-capacity squeeze and caused system managers to look for programming to unload. Roughly two and a half million Americans have experienced cutbacks in, or the loss of, C-SPAN as a result; what they have got instead, Lamb told me, are things "that no one is asking for"—such as the opportunity, in Steubenville, Ohio, to choose among five different public-television stations.

"Wacko!" is Lamb's thumbnail assessment of the Cable Act. "Congress has created two classes of communicators," he said. "If you come in over the traditional airwaves, you can demand to be carried. If you come in over the satellite, you have no rights at all. I keep waiting for someone to explain to me how all this is benefitting the public."

Having ascertained that Lamb is a man with his share of opinions, I asked him if he didn't find it difficult to strip down mentally for his appearances in front of the camera. (I envisioned an elaborate, Zen-like rite of purification.) He shook his head. "It's not hard," he assured me. "You'd be surprised." There have been a few times over the years when, by his own standards, he has lost control. During the 1992 Republican Convention, in Houston, a woman called one day to complain that, as Lamb reconstructs it, she had been seeing and hearing rather too many Republicans. "She really teed off at me, and I teed right back at her," Lamb told me. To be more precise, he permitted himself to suggest that if the caller found something about the program displeasing she might consider . . . *changing channels*. Lamb was so disgusted with himself over this outburst that he left Houston that day, assigning others to fulfill his remaining interviewing commitments, and took himself off the air for the next two weeks.

If it is hard to figure Brian Lamb in the bright and perky world of TV newspeople, it is no easier to figure him in the fast-talking, flamboyant fraternity of media pioneers. He has no grand theory of the technological past and future. Ask him what might appear to be a complicated or a profound question about TV or TV news—an invitation to a lofty discourse—and he answers with a couple of sentences that, syntactically, might have come out of the mouth of Gary Cooper.

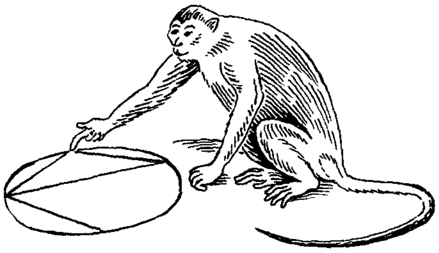
Why are there no tight closeups on C-SPAN? "If you were sitting in a room with someone, you wouldn't run up and peer into his eyes." Why did C-SPAN, in its coverage of last spring's gay-and-lesbian march on Washington, include the raunchy scenes and off-color language that every other TV network left on the cutting-room floor? "We think people should have a chance to see the whole thing and make up their own mind." Why do C-SPAN's various moderators and interviewers (beginning with Lamb himself) seem so subdued—as if they had taken downers, or everyone else had taken uppers? "I was in Indiana watching the news with a friend of mine, and the guy came on and said, 'Hi, I'm Jeff Smith. Karen Jones isn't here tonight.' That's what they're into—people, ratings, and all that. They care about Karen Jones more than the news. Day in and day out, they build the personality. We decide every day not to."

Of course, Lamb is not the first person to question the value of stars in TV news. On this subject, as on others, his originality lies not so much in his analysis of the problem as in the bloodhoundlike way he pursues the logic of that analysis far beyond the point where everyone else has abandoned it. By C-SPAN decree, the first person you see at the beginning of a show is always a guest rather than the host, and the interviewers are under instructions to keep their questions brief; and, even more shockingly, on-camera work is supplementary duty for employees whose main responsibilities lie elsewhere. (One regular C-SPAN interviewer, Susan Swain, is a senior vice-president in charge of programming; another, Bruce Collins, is the network's legal counsel.) By these and other methods, Lamb has created the world's first star-proof news organization.

Steve Scully, C-SPAN's White House producer, used to cover politics for a local news show in Rochester, New York. Things got bad for him on his old job, he told me, when a consulting firm was brought in to liven up the show. "They told you how to dress, how to comb your hair, what kind of makeup to wear, what kind of ties to wear, how to interact with the other anchors," Scully recalled. "They even told you how to smile. That's one of the nice things about C-SPAN: there's no one telling us how to smile."

WHEN I first called up C-SPAN to inquire about the possibility of interviewing Lamb, the network's publicist, Rayne Pollack, cautioned me not to ask about his personal life. She soon made it apparent that, as forbidden territory goes, we were discussing a very modest piece of real estate. Lamb gets to work early (by six o'clock when he is doing a morning show; by seven-thirty or eight on other days). He has a long-term girlfriend—a corporate lobbyist—with whom he shares a town house in Arlington, Virginia, but he has never been married and has no children. "He doesn't play golf," Pollack said. "He doesn't have a dog. He doesn't run. He doesn't cook. He has no hobbies, other than reading books for 'Booknotes.' " Naturally, I didn't take these claims on faith; an investigation was called for. Now, having probed the darkest corners of the Brian Lamb story, I can report that he was the kind of boy who, in the words of one old friend, "never missed a day in school"; that he used to be known as the Doo, because of a perceived resemblance to Howdy Doody; and that (in what was perhaps the most outré episode in his past) he worked his way through Purdue University as a disk jockey, and between his junior and senior years created an "American Bandstand"-style TV show, called "Dance Date," which had a brief run on a local station.

Lamb spent the first twenty-two years of his life in Lafayette, Indiana, where his father was a tavern owner turned beer distributor. After getting a degree in speech from Purdue—the home-town university—he drifted around for a while, entered the Navy, spent two years at sea, and in 1966 was sent to Washington to be a Pentagon press officer.



At the Pentagon, Lamb became acquainted with the world of TV news. The mid-sixties were a time of troubled relations between the press and the military, and people were expected to make clear choices. You were for our troops or you weren't. You were for the First Amendment or you weren't. Lamb was only twenty-four when he got to Washington, but he was a very serious twenty-four, and he regarded both sides with a cool eye.

One day, a network correspondent was shooting a piece about a group of young antiwar protesters from Connecticut who had camped out in a Pentagon entrance. Prior to his appearance, they were as passive as could be. "They were literally lying on the floor," Lamb says. "Then, the minute the camera started rolling, the kids got up, the placards came out, and they yelled and screamed, 'Stop the war! Stop the war!' " The reporter was having trouble with his delivery, and Lamb watched in astonishment as—by unspoken agreement between the demonstrators and the news crew—the lying-down-and-jumping-up routine repeated itself with each take. "I thought, Gee, this is interesting—I'm going to watch it on the evening news," Lamb recalls. "And there it was, these kids screaming and shouting, when the truth was they had never screamed or shouted on their own. They had come peacefully. Nice kids."

Stuck on television, Lamb got a job as assistant manager of a TV station in Indiana after an honorable discharge from the Navy, in 1967. But Lamb was stuck on Washington as well, and he returned there a year later, becoming, successively, a radio reporter for United Press International; press secretary to a Republican senator from Colorado, Peter H. Dominick; and, in 1971, a spokesman for the Office of Telecommunications Policy, under Richard Nixon. The name Nixon is a sensitive one for a journalist to have on his résumé, and Lamb is prickly about the notion that, as he puts it, "if you worked in the Nixon Administration you must be a hatchet murderer." Yet he also says that, in retrospect, the work of the telecommunications office—attempting to bring competition and diversity to a highly regulated and monopolistic field—was poisoned by the Nixon White House's campaign of intimidation against what it saw as hostile elements in the media.

Moral considerations aside, the telecommunications office was a place to learn about the technology and the economics of television—about duplexing, multiplexing, parabolic dishes, transponders, pole rights, and the dawning of what was called "the wired nation." By the time Lamb left the office, in May of 1974, he had conceived a plan for what Henry Goldberg, one of his colleagues there—now a communications lawyer and still a close friend—describes as "a network that relied on the alternative media of cable and satellite to bring Washington into people's homes."

Lamb took a job as the Washington bureau chief of a trade magazine, *Cablevision*, and in his spare time he began trying to mobilize support among cable operators for his venture. His argument was a high-minded one, according to Robert Titsch, Sr., who was his boss at *Cablevision* and an early backer of his plans. "Brian was driven by the dream," Titsch recalls. "He felt that the American public was getting screwed by television. He felt that the government—the most powerful government in the world—was hidden from its constituents, and that people should see it." By providing such a service, Lamb pointed out, cable would be announcing to the nation that it intended to be something more than a clone of the networks.

As it turned out, many of the nation's cable-system operators had no objection to being clones of the networks—if they could clone some of the networks' profits while they were at it. The cable industry, which had got its start in the early sixties, was still controlled largely by its founders, about whom Amos B. Hostetter, Jr., the chairman and chief executive officer of Continental Cablevision (and a longtime C-SPAN board member), observes, "These people were not Time Warner or Cox Broadcasting. They were small-town appliance dealers who put an antenna up on a hill and brought a wire down from there to hook your television set up, so that they could sell you the television set." When they thought about the future of the industry, their thoughts focussed on cash flow, not on proving anything to the country. "There was a tremendous amount of rejection," Lamb recalls. "People would pat you on the head, and say, 'Nice little boy, keep it up, Brian.' "

What turned Lamb's preposterous idea into a plausible one was, strangely, Congress. For years, there had been talk of letting TV cameras into the House of Representatives, and the talk began to get serious after Thomas P. O'Neill, Jr., became the House Speaker, in 1977. O'Neill insisted, however, that the cameras had to be under the House's control, and neither the commercial networks nor PBS would go along with that arrangement. The standoff between the House and the networks gave Lamb his opening.

It had always been assumed that television coverage of the House, when it happened, would be in the form of newsworthy snatches as defined by the television industry. But one afternoon in October of 1977 Lamb took the occasion of a *Cablevision* interview with Lionel Van Deerlin, the chairman of the House Communications Subcommittee, to mention that cable TV, with its expanded channel capacity, might be capable of carrying the sessions of the House in full. When the question of installing cameras came up for a vote, Van Deerlin made a speech embracing the concept of a cable linkup, and the House, ignoring the networks' objections, endorsed the O'Neill plan. By now, Lamb had made a handful of converts—cable executives who believed that in order to expand their subscriber base they had to appeal to a wider range of tastes than the networks. One of these mavericks was Bob Rosencrans, the head of what later became United Artists Cable, who had recently joined forces with Madison Square Garden to create the MSG sports network. After the House vote, Lamb went to Rosencrans with a proposal to establish a nonprofit corporation to carry the House gavel to gavel. Rosencrans's response, as Lamb recalls it, was "I'll give you twenty-five thousand dollars

PORTA SAN PANCRAZIO

The bees haven't buzzed away, nor has a horseman galloped
off. In the bar Gianicolo, old-timers enjoy their salad
days, and the ice cube melts cooling the ailing motor
grateful for sipping twice the proverbial water.

Eight years have scurried by. Wars have flared up and smoldered,
families crumbled, scum bared its teeth grown older;
airplanes fell from the sky and the radio mumbled "Jesus."
The linen can still be washed, but the dermal creases

won't yield to the gentlest palm. The sun high above a winter
Rome is jostling the purple smoke with bare rays. The cinder
reeks of burned leaves, and the fountain is glittering like a wobbly
medal pinned to a cannon at noon for its aimless volley.

Stone is employed worldwide to keep memory captive.
Yet cropping up is much harder than vanishing in a perspective
running out of the city straight through the years and further
in its pursuit of pure time, devoid of love and future.

Life without us is, darling, thinkable. It exists as
honeybees, horsemen, bars, habitués, columns, vistas
and clouds over this battlefield whose every standing statue
triumphs, with its physique, over a chance to touch you.

—JOSEPH BRODSKY

(*Translated, from the Russian, by the author.*)

and my name—see what you can do." Lamb continues, "So I took his name and the twenty-five thousand dollars and the fact that the House had agreed to televise, and I went around to the industry saying, 'Can I get twenty-five from you? And you?' " Rosencrans made another key contribution to the enterprise: he offered Lamb a shared-time arrangement on MSG Network's satellite channel. The new network would be able to use it by day, at a cut-rate price, and MSG would use it at night.

No less important was a new argument that rang out between the lines of Lamb's appeal: cable TV had no news programming to speak of (CNN would not go on the air until 1980), so it wasn't in a position to offer a politician exposure, as the networks could. As Henry Goldberg recalls, "now we could go back and say, 'Look, what better way to curry favor with Congress than to carry them?' "

Lamb pieced together the backing he needed—the projected budget was only four hundred thousand dollars a year—and went to see the Speaker. His proposal was, on one hand, not very impressive. Cable wasn't "real television," and Lamb himself was a nobody. On the other hand, Lamb was talking about gavel-to-gavel coverage—something O'Neill had never dared to imagine—and he was offering the House leaders a chance to spit in the eye of the network-news people.

Lamb left O'Neill's office with a handshake deal, and in the ensuing months, aided by Rosencrans and others, he formed a corporation—C-SPAN. It had four employees and a five-hundred-square-foot office in a Rosslyn, Virginia, apartment building when it began transmitting, on March 19, 1979. For its first seven months, the network showed the House and nothing else, and when the business of the House reached into the evening C-SPAN got summarily bumped by MSG. For a studio, Lamb used a corner of the office, with a backdrop consisting of a blue curtain and a C-SPAN sign (the sign collapsed in the middle of one early interview). The entire budget for C-SPAN over its first five years was about what, by the more conservative reports, ABC has just agreed to pay Diane Sawyer annually. "You can't imagine how insignificant I was—how insignificant this place was," Lamb says.

THE last twenty-five years have seen two great initiatives, public TV and cable TV, launched for the declared purpose of bringing change to the medium. Between them, they have answered the wish lists of a number of underserved constituencies. But they have also proved increasingly inclined to emulate the tone, the pace, and the commercial thrust of television as it existed before they came along. "To me, the story of C-SPAN is not how it got started but what happened after it was started," says John P. Frazee, Jr., the former chairman and C.E.O. of the telecommunications company Centel, who was also the chairman of C-SPAN's board in the mid-eighties. "It would have been easy for Brian to turn C-SPAN into a CNN, with expensive sets, high-priced on-air talent, maybe even commercial sponsorship. He hasn't done any of those things."

C-SPAN was widely praised for its coverage of the 1992 Democratic National Convention. Elizabeth Kolbert commented in the *Times* that C-SPAN actually let you see and hear what was happening on the podium, while ABC gave viewers "a lot of talk about what the Democrats would have told them, if only Mr. Jennings and Mr. Brinkley and Mr. Wooten and the rest of the ABC News team hadn't been so busy talking themselves." After the Convention, however, C-SPAN went into a small frenzy of self-flagellation over the way a speech about AIDS, by Elizabeth Glaser, had been shot. The camerawork had been handled by a network pool, and John Splaine, a professor of education at the University of Maryland who serves as C-SPAN's unofficial ethical watchdog, complained both about what, by C-SPAN standards, was a distracting number of cutaways—eleven in the last two minutes—and about the fact that most of them showed weeping women, while the actual audience was half male and many of the people in the hall, women as well as men, had dry eyes.

Although nobody besides Splaine objected, the cutaway issue helped C-SPAN to decide that the network would do its own podium coverage of the Republican Convention. The Republicans, as it happened, also had an AIDS speech, also given by a woman (Mary Fisher). This time, the cutaways emphasized non-weeping males, including one, Vice-President Dan Quayle, who was making his way across the Convention floor shaking hands and ignoring the speech altogether.

The rest of TV news looks very odd when you come back to it after watching C-SPAN. Rituals long practiced with a great air of authority—the sign-ons, standups, and sign-offs; the drumbeat that attends the announcement of the story of the day; the gotcha questions that hardly ever get anyone—suddenly look like nervous tics. The whole rhythm of TV news begins to seem jerky and unnatural, like those little intervals of what some busy parents call "quality time" with their children. What the newsmen and women are out to prove, however, is toughness rather than love: toughness in a format that makes the real thing—tough scrutiny of positions, records, and issues—impossible, because it would take too much time.

Time is something that C-SPAN has plenty of, and the longer you watch C-SPAN the more you see that time is the key to everything else. Time makes it possible to deal with issues that seem utterly beyond the grasp of traditional TV news (NAFTA, health care, the information superhighway), and with unreachable subjects in the emotional realm as well. When you watch, say, Paul Tsongas's wife leaning over to give him a kiss in the middle of his speech of withdrawal from the 1992 Presidential race, and Tsongas, his voice parched and throbbing, continuing, unaware of the lipstick impression that has been planted on his cheek, you realize that such a thing could never be captured on another network. Time creates the potential for boredom, of course, but also for something that has been virtually banished from television: spontaneity.

"Everything was getting shorter and shorter," Roger Ailes, the former political consultant, who is now the president of the cable network CNBC, commented recently. "All the research pointed that way—and suddenly Brian Lamb said, 'Hey, let's do news longer and longer.' " The difference, from an interviewee's perspective, was summed up for me by Ralph Nader. "I get invited on the 'Today' show every once in a while," he told me. "Once, they gave me three minutes and ten seconds, and I said, 'You know, you're moving from sound bites to sound barks—soon you'll ask me a question, and I'll just bark!" On C-SPAN, "you can talk in sentences and paragraphs, back and forth," Nader said. "You can actually speak the language."

At C-SPAN, as in all organizations, considerations of time and money are closely linked. Although C-SPAN is no longer a threadbare operation, it remains astonishingly inexpensive by cable as well as by broadcast standards. The pay scale is more in tune with the nonprofit world than with the TV world. (Lamb's salary of a hundred and ninety-five thousand dollars a year is lavish by C-SPAN standards. "The board had to force him to take a raise," John Frazee told me. "He went multi-years without one, and he would just never bring it up.") The staff is tiny—a hundred and eighty-eight employees, at last count. (National Public Radio, by contrast, has four hundred and thirty-three.) C-SPAN's entire 1993 budget was eighteen million dollars—less than a twentieth of CNN's. Lamb has taken American television through a kind of time-cost warp into a new zone of economics, where every minute is *not* precious.

In recent years, television has been the subject of a heated intellectual debate between those who say it is bad and those who say it is irredeemably bad. C-SPAN makes mainstream TV's problems look a little less like the result of some built-in technological malevolence and a little more like that of (as Brian Lamb concluded twenty-five years ago) an artificially restricted market, carved out by three big, for-profit bureaucracies chasing the same mass audience. If television has an inherent nature, C-SPAN reminds us that it includes the simple ability to transport us to places—for the purpose, that is, of showing us not just Dan Rather in a new costume but something akin to life itself. Other reminders are beginning to pop up elsewhere on the television dial. "When you have hundreds of channels instead of a few networks, the audience gets so split up that nobody can afford to invest huge amounts of money in any one program, as such," Lawrence K. Grossman, who has run PBS and also NBC News, pointed out to me recently. He was talking specifically about a venture in which he is involved—Horizons Cable Network, "a cultural and intellectual counterpart to C-SPAN," which has backing from PBS and the public-television stations in New York and Boston. But he was also talking about a roster of other proposed talk and cultural networks. "The idea is to just put cameras on existing events," Grossman said, "and not worry about television production as such."

C-SPAN itself has expansion plans. As things stand, the unpredictable hours of the House and Senate (around which the rest of the schedule is constructed) sharply limit C-SPAN's ability to cover events live or to make programming decisions ahead of time, the way other networks do. If Lamb has his way, there will be a C-SPAN3, a C-SPAN4, and a C-SPAN5 in a few years—networks devoted, respectively, to domestic politics (political programming apart from the sessions of the Senate and the House), to business and economics, and to international affairs. Those ideas, however, are on hold for now, pending the resolution of the must-carry dispute and, more importantly, the advent of the "five-hundred-channel universe."

Meanwhile, C-SPAN has been branching out in smaller ways: a Sunday-morning retrospective of the week's issues and events; the C-SPAN Schoolbus, a travelling exhibit, for teachers and students, of the network's educational possibilities; and a plan (in connection with C-SPAN's fifteenth anniversary) to televise reënactments of the Lincoln-Douglas debates from the Illinois towns where they originally occurred. (Lamb is quick to point out that the towns, not C-SPAN, will be responsible for the staging, and that the venture is a onetime thing—not a first step down the road to docudrama.) C-SPAN has also been sowing offspring around the world. Ireland, Australia, Venezuela, Japan, France, Israel, Germany, Finland, Korea—about forty countries in all have sent delegations to Washington to consult Lamb, and quite a few have put their legislatures on TV or have taken steps in that direction. "It's spreading," Lamb says. "Yes, sir."

Over the last few years, Lamb has withdrawn from day-to-day management decisions, assuming what he calls an "overseer's" role. He has done so, he explained to me, partly in order to have more time for such projects as the debates and the Schoolbus, and partly in order to insure that "if I walk out of here tomorrow this place will survive."

"C-SPAN is the promise that all those guys talked about when radio and television were first getting started," Jeff Greenfield, of ABC News, says. "They said, 'This will bring Americans closer to their government—isn't that great!' But it never worked out that way, because radio and television found other things to do—until Brian came along."

The first people in Washington to wake up to C-SPAN were a group of conservative Republicans in the House, led by Newt Gingrich, of Georgia. Near the end of Ronald Reagan's first term, they began using a special time slot at the end of the legislative day to deliver blistering attacks on the Democrats and their policies—attacks intended not for the ears of their colleagues (who weren't present) but for those of the home audience. Through C-SPAN, Gingrich and a few colleagues achieved a degree of national celebrity unheard of among members of the House, and they got the attention of the House leadership. In May of 1984, Tip O'Neill, infuriated by their tactics, ordered the camera to pan the chamber, revealing for the first time that it was empty. (The Democrats have since concluded that neither party's dignity is enhanced by the spectacle of legislators orating in a void; beginning on May 23rd, the House will revert, at least temporarily, to the old practice of showing only the member who has the floor.) What Gingrich and the others had discovered was a way to get airtime that was not conditioned on their willingness to be, as Gingrich put it to me recently, "in the place the news media are paying attention to."

While Gingrich, the heir apparent to the post of House Minority Leader, serves to illustrate the career-boosting possibilities of the network, the example of Senator Joseph Biden, Jr., of Delaware, suggests the perils that now await a politician whose story does not play well on C-SPAN. Seven years ago, as a fledgling candidate for President, Biden welcomed the network's cameras into a kaffeeklatsch with a group of New Hampshire voters, and proceeded to give a considerably exaggerated account of his academic achievements and to tell the man who had innocently inquired about them, "I think I have a much higher I.Q. than you do." Eleanor Clift, a reporter for *Newsweek*, obtained a videotape of this bizarre performance, and was inspired to do the research that established Biden's falsehoods. Her story, coming on top of revelations of oratorical plagiarism (operatives in the rival campaign of Michael Dukakis had circulated an "attack video," also derived from C-SPAN, demonstrating that Biden had lifted not only phrases but autobiographical anecdotes from the British Labour Party leader Neil Kinnock), seemed to knock the stuffing out of his candidacy. Biden withdrew from the race before a single primary or caucus was held.

The subject of C-SPAN's effect on American politics is one that Lamb himself steadfastly avoids. Others, however, maintain that it has helped ease out of power a generation of American politicians whose gift for television was limited to the delivery of prepared speeches and sound bites, and has helped bring forward a generation who, like House Speaker Thomas Foley and Senate Majority Leader George Mitchell, are articulate in a sustained, everyday way, and comfortable arguing the merits as well as the politics of an issue.

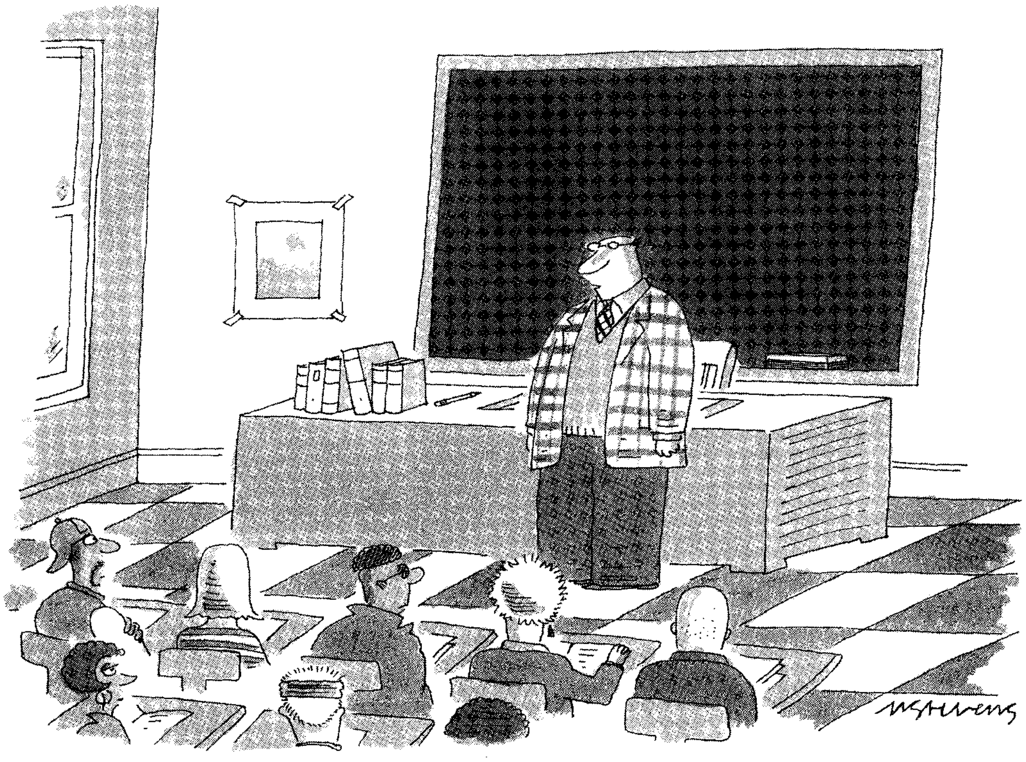
When Bill Clinton's campaign for President was still in the dreaming stage, his gubernatorial press secretary, Michael Gauldin, decided to "target" C-SPAN. "It was a good method of shooting over the wall" to reach a "political élite," Gauldin, who is now the chief public-relations officer at the Department of Energy, says. After an appearance before the Democratic Leadership Council in May of 1991, Clinton himself kept talking to friends and associates about how many people had seen his speech on C-SPAN. That summer, Gauldin made a conscious effort to have him appear at events that C-SPAN was likely to cover—and to alert the network to his presence. "It was as if he were on C-SPAN all the time," Gauldin says.

Clinton's great talent for simply talking to people, with TV cameras running, matched up well with what polls and focus groups suggested was mounting popular dissatisfaction with the way candidates had been presenting themselves (or had been presented) on TV: in sound bites, photo ops, and attacks on other candidates. People were ready, it seemed to Clinton's principal media adviser during the campaign, Frank Greer, for a candidate who was obsessively devoted to issues.

"When we hit the feeding frenzy in New Hampshire, what did we do?" Greer says. "We bought thirty minutes of time"—on commercial stations—"Thursday and Friday, and on Thursday we staged a town meeting with undecided voters and on Friday it was unscreened phone calls, just like C-SPAN. And, from that point on, what did you see happen? As the campaign progressed, you saw the networks—especially the morning shows—following the format of C-SPAN. I really look to Brian Lamb as a visionary in the world of media. He has given voters and citizens more of what they really want out of television, and he has forced the other media to start following his lead. I think he transformed the whole character of the campaign."

The Clinton Administration is no less dedicated to the use of long-form TV than the Clinton campaign was. The sales strategy for health-care reform involves sending the President—and the First Lady and other key figures—to a series of town-hall meetings around the country. Before the advent of C-SPAN, no network would have deigned to show such gatherings in full, partly for economic reasons but partly because of another of those conventions that went unquestioned until Brian Lamb came along: a medium-wide aversion to "self-serving events." Such events are, of course, C-SPAN's bread and butter, and its readiness to cede hours of national TV time to partisan groups—not only Democrats and Republicans but Libertarians, Perotistas, and socialists—may be the most revolutionary thing about the network. As far as health care is concerned, the White House has had its say on C-SPAN, and so have the insurance companies, the pharmaceutical manufacturers, supporters of the single-payer plan, and virtually every other organized group with a point of view.

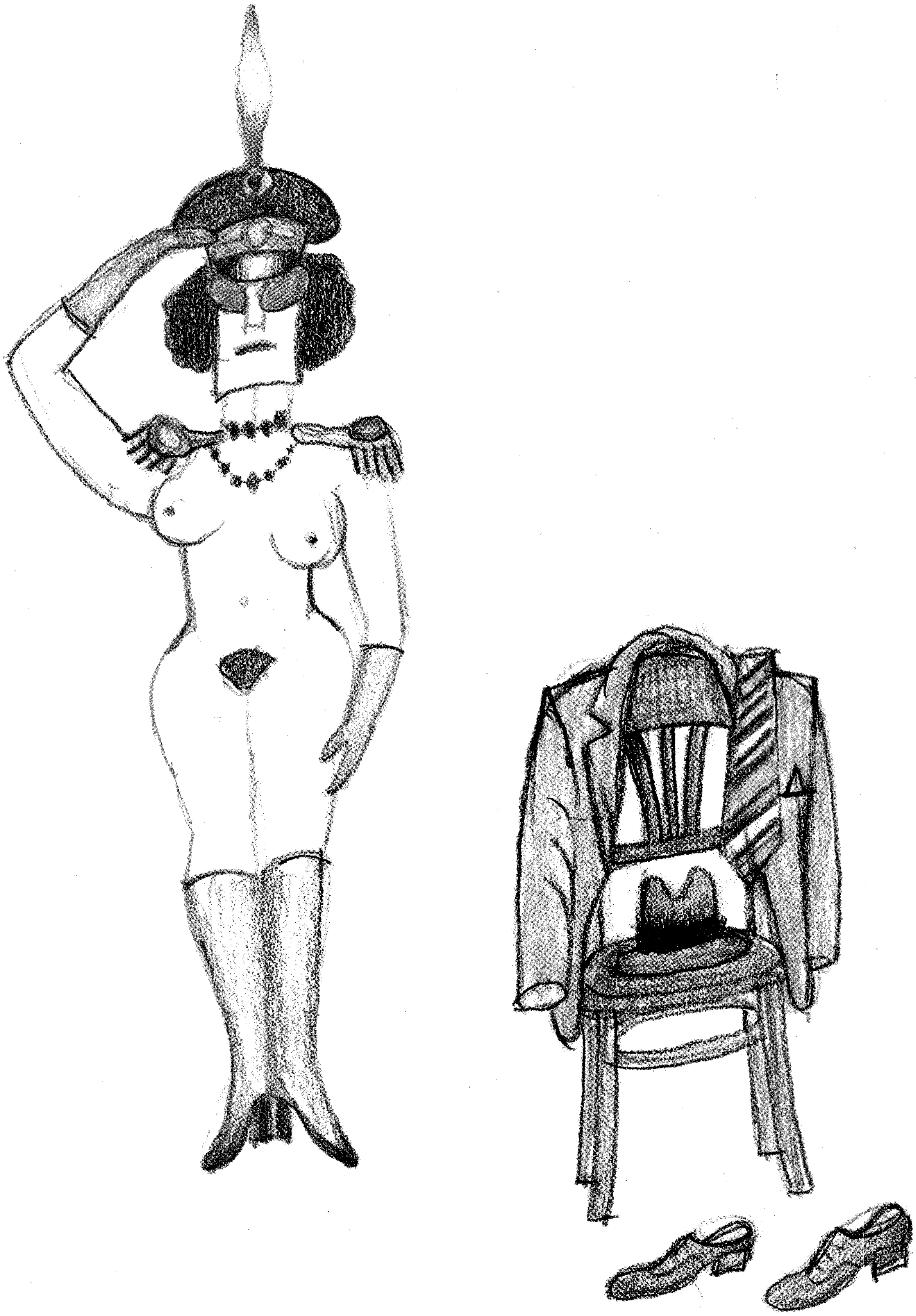
In the 1992 campaign, Ross Perot called for an "electronic town hall" in which the President would act as a sort of m.c., spelling out a problem and its possible solutions, and the people would then vote for the solution they favored. It is a vision that has struck some commentators as an invitation to high-tech demagoguery. Meanwhile, unnoticed by Perot or his critics, a prototype of the electronic town hall has already arrived, and it is not so scary. ♦

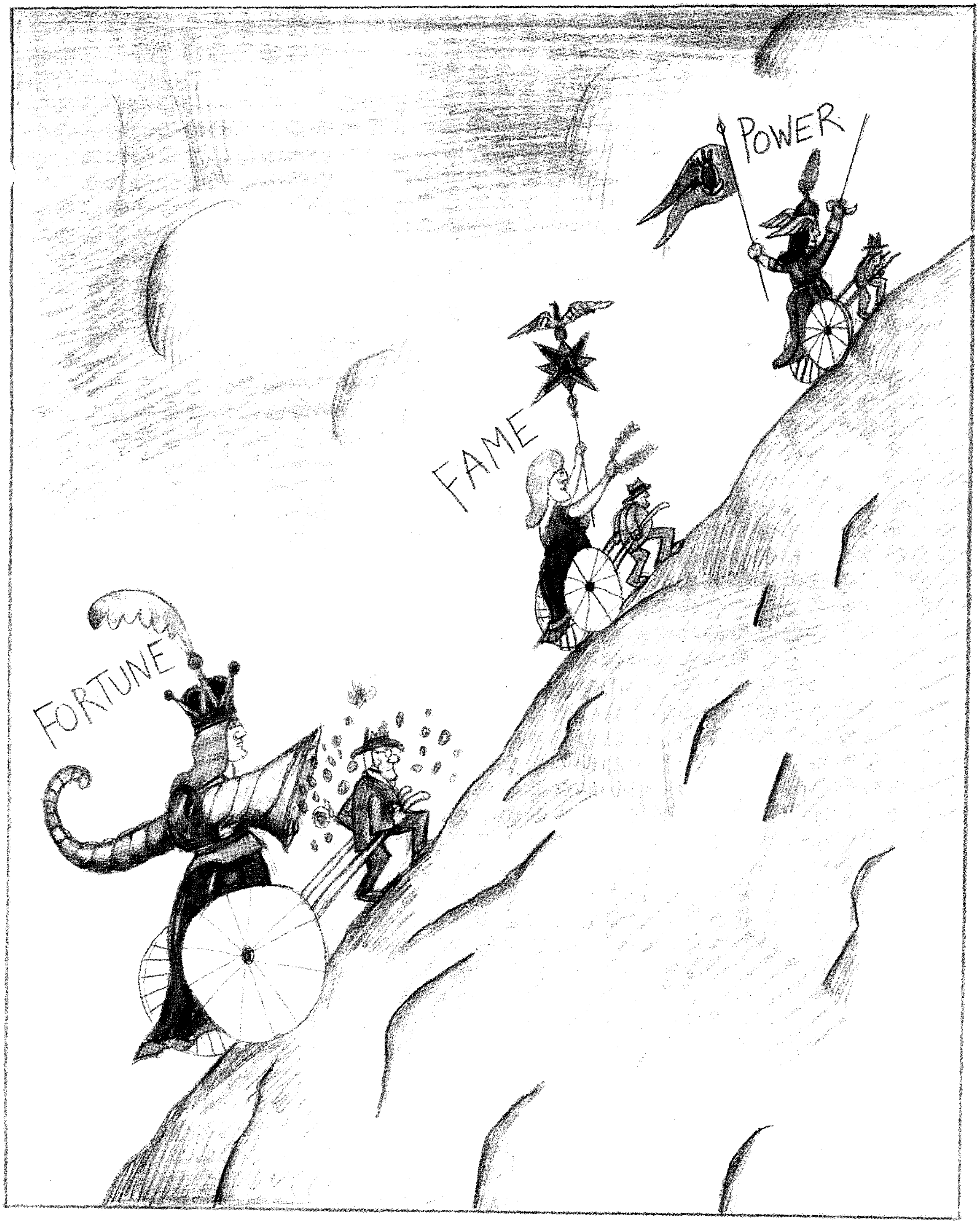


"My name is Mr. Collins. I'll be teaching you English literature, and I'm armed."

ONWARD

BY SAUL STEINBERG

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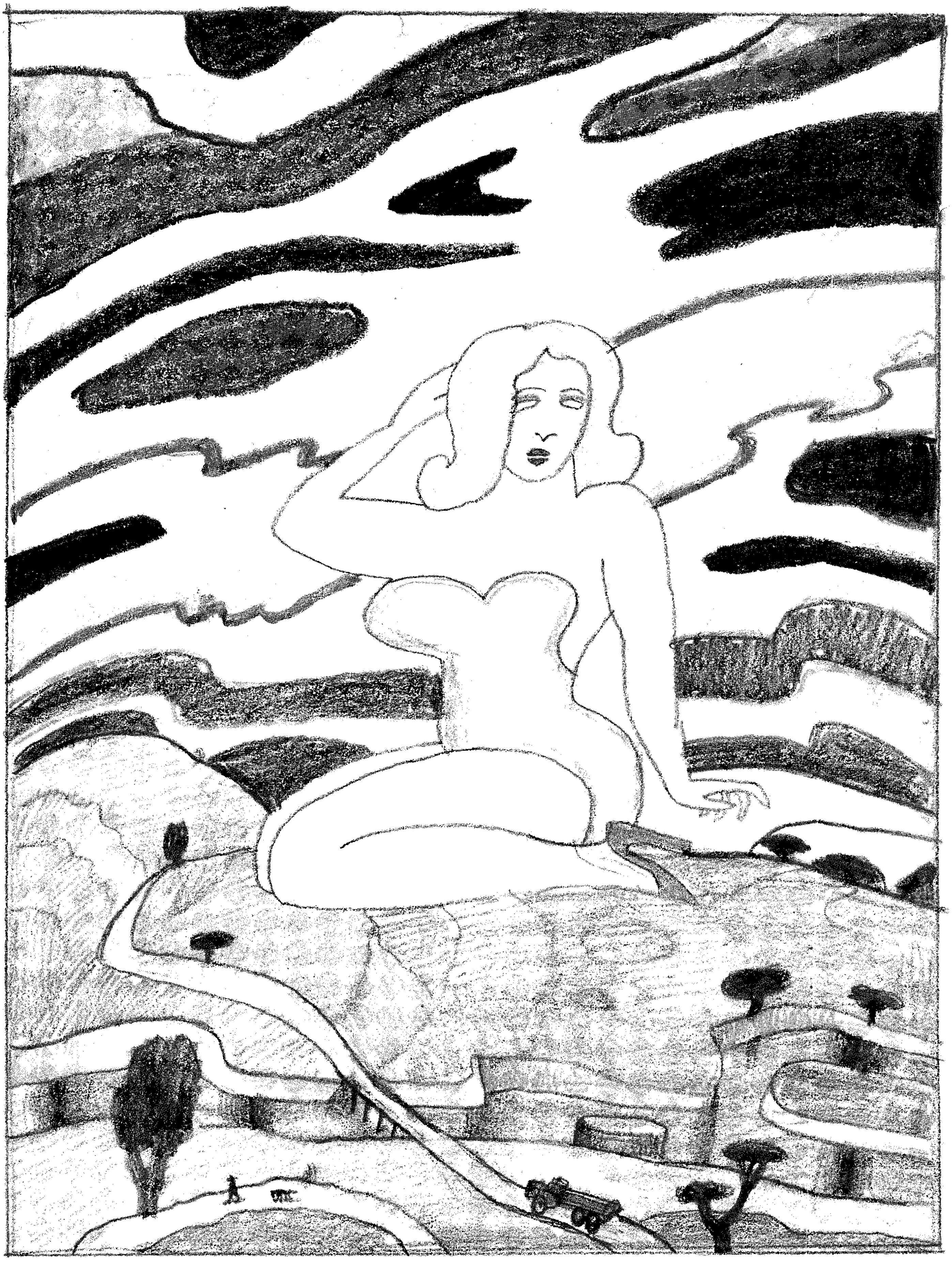

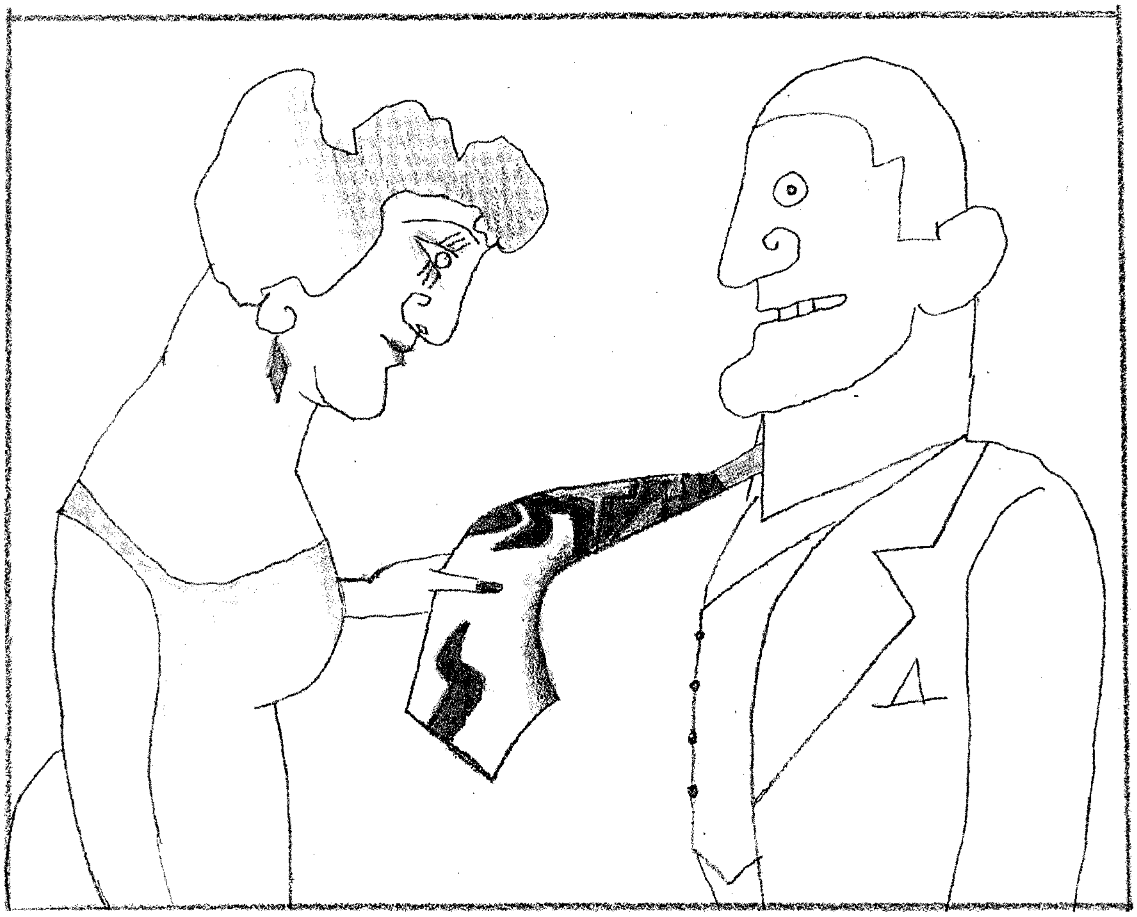

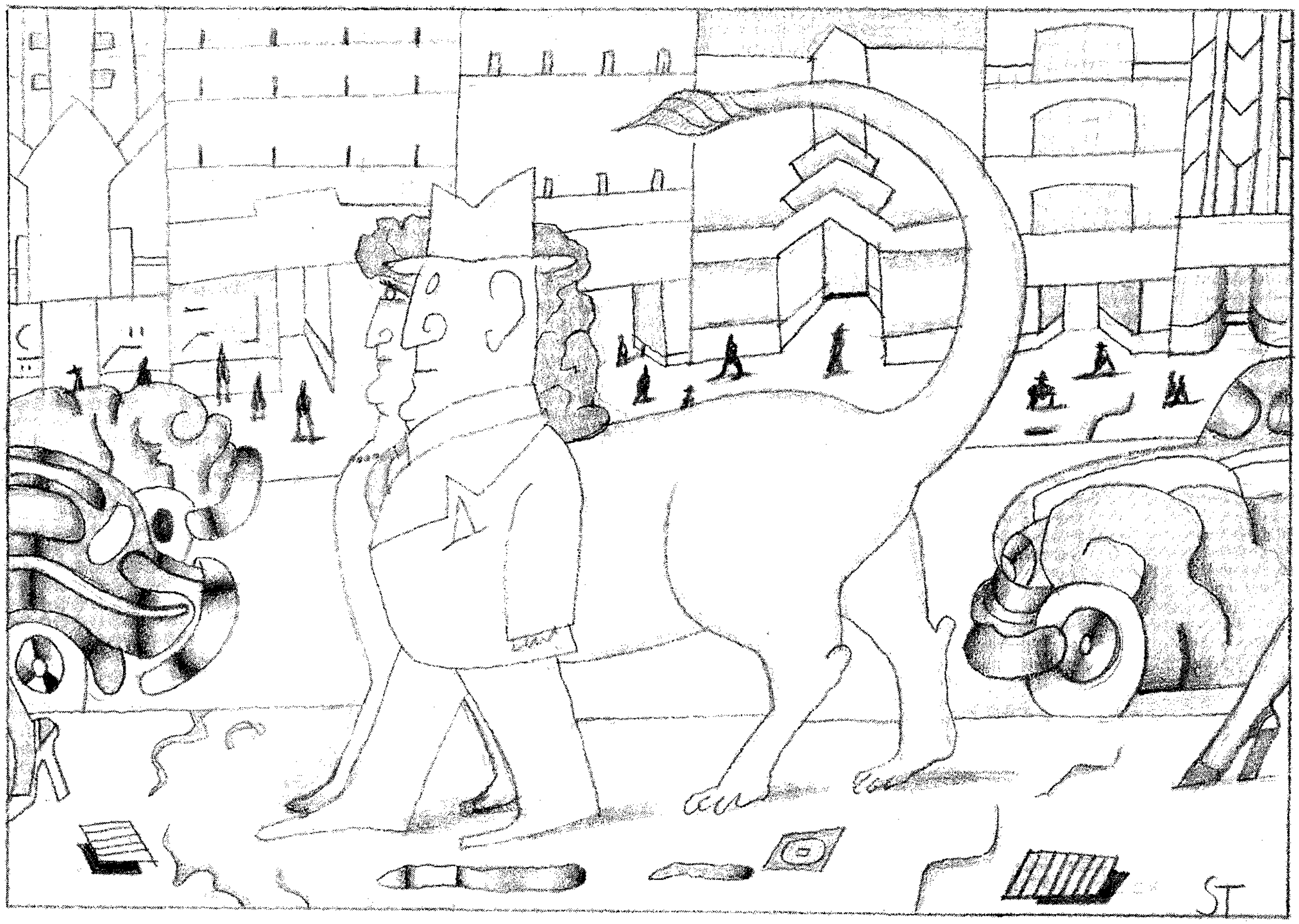
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FICTION

WAY DOWN DEEP IN THE JUNGLE

BY THOM JONES

DR. KOESTLER'S baboon, George Babbitt, liked to sit near the foot of the table when the physician took his evening meal and eat a paste the doctor had made consisting of ripe bananas and Canadian Mist whiskey. Koestler was careful to give him only a little, but one scorching afternoon when the generators were down and the air-conditioners out, Koestler and Babbitt sat under the gazebo out near the baobab tree that was the ersatz town square of the Global Aid Mission and got blasted. It was the coolest spot you could find, short of going into the bush. The baboon and the man were waiting for a late supper, since the ovens were out, too. Cornelius Johnson, the Mission cook, was barbecuing chickens out in the side yard—not the typical, scrawny African chickens, but plump, succulent ones that Johnson made fat with sacks of maize that the generous donors to Global Aid had intended for the undernourished peoples of the region.

It had been a gruelling day, and Koestler was drinking warm whiskey on an empty stomach. At first, he was impatient for a meal, then resigned to waiting, then half smashed and glad to wait, and he began offering Babbitt straight shots of booze. When he saw the look of sheer ecstasy that came over Babbitt's Lincolnesque face, he let the simian drink on, convinced that the animal was undergoing something holy. And perhaps he was, but after the initial rush of intoxication, Babbitt made the inevitable novice drinker's mistake of trying to amplify heaven. He snatched the whole bottle of Canadian Mist and scampered off into the bush like a drunken Hunchback of Notre Dame. Koestler had to laugh; it seemed so comical—the large Anubis baboon was unwilling to share the last of the amber nectar with his master. Well, there was always more where it came from, but suddenly Koestler wondered about the rapidity with which Babbitt had been slamming it down. He was afraid Babbitt would poison himself. Koestler took off into the bush after the animal, and he was instantly worried when he did not find Babbitt in any of his favorite trees. But Babbitt, who was perched higher than usual, announced his presence by launching the empty bottle down at Koestler like a bomb, just missing him. It was a calculated attempt at mayhem, Koestler realized as Babbitt began to rant and rave at him with an astonishing repertoire of hostile invective which not only puzzled Koestler but wounded him to the core. Koestler had been Babbitt's champion and staunchest defender. Virtually no one on the compound had any use for the large and powerful baboon. As Sister Doris, the chief nurse, liked to say, Babbitt was aggressive, noisy, a biter, a thief, and a horrendous mess-maker with no redeeming quality except the fact that he was one of God's creatures. Father Stuart quickly pointed out that crocodiles were God's creatures, too, but that didn't mean you had to let them move in with you. Almost every day someone would come up to Koestler and besiege him with complaints about the animal. Only Father Stuart had the nerve to confront Babbitt directly, once using a bird gun to shoot Babbitt's red ass with a load of rock salt, an incident that caused the priest and the doctor to cease speaking to each other, except through third parties. Koestler and the priest had become so estranged that Koestler refused to dine with the rest of the staff, and this suited him fine, since he no longer had to sit through the sham of hymns, prayers, and all the folderol that surrounded meals in the lodge.

Koestler was a loner, and preferred his own company to that of anyone else after long, hard days of bonhomie with the junior physicians and the in-your-face contact with patients—patients not only deprived of basic necessities but lacking such amenities as soap, mouthwash, and deodorant. Koestler found that it was useful, and even necessary, to remain remote—to cultivate the image of the chief—since an aspect of tribalism invaded the compound in spite of the artificial structure of the church, which was imposed on it and which never seemed to take very well in the bush. The newfangled wet blanket of civilization was thrown over ancient customs to almost no avail. But there were ways to get things done out here, and Koestler embodied those most notable characteristics of the New Zealander: resourcefulness, individualism, and self-reliance. In fact, Koestler carried self-containment to a high art. He had a lust for the rough-and-tumble, and preferred the hardships of Africa to the pleasant climate and easygoing customs of his homeland. As Koestler was fond of thinking, if Sir Edmund Hillary had a mountain to conquer when he climbed Everest in 1953 and breathed the rarefied air there, Koestler had baboons to tame and tropical diseases to vanquish in the here and now of Zaire. Koestler modestly considered himself New Zealand's gift to equatorial Africa.

NOW Babbitt was high up another tree, raising so much hell that the majority of the Africans—workers and convalescents—had assembled to watch. Babbitt scrambled back and forth along a limb with a pencil-size twig in his fingers, mimicking the manner in which Koestler smoked his Dunhill menthols à la Franklin Delano Roosevelt. Babbitt's imitation was so precise that it seemed uncannily human. Then, having established his character, he did something far worse: he imitated the way Koestler sat on the toilet during his bowel movements, which were excruciatingly painful because of Koestler's piles.

This was all much to the delight of the Africans, who roared and fell to the ground and pounded it or simply held their sides and hooted hysterically. Babbitt, who was so often reviled, feared, and despised, now gave the Africans enormous pleasure. They roared anew each time Babbitt bared his teeth and shook his fist like evil incarnate, once nearly toppling from his limb before abruptly grabbing hold of it again. Babbitt's flair for the dramatic had roused the Africans to a fever pitch. Some of the natives began to dance as if invaded by unseen spirits, and this frightened Koestler marginally, as it had during his first days in Africa. Koestler thought that when the Africans were dancing—especially when they got out the drums and palm wine—they were as mesmerized by unreason as the mobs who once clamored to hear the irrational, primitive, but dangerously soul-satisfying ravings of Hitler and other megalomaniacs and Antichrists of his ilk.

The doctor retained his composure throughout the episode and, speaking to his pet in reasonable tones, attempted to persuade him to come down. Koestler knew that baboons did not climb trees as a rule, and while Babbitt was not an ordinary baboon, he was very unsteady up in a tree, even when sober. But the more sweetly Koestler coaxed, the more Babbitt raged at him. Koestler instructed Johnson—the only African who was not holding his sides with laughter—to run back to the compound and obtain a stretcher to use as a safety net in case Babbitt passed out and fell from the tree, but as the doctor was intently giving Johnson these instructions, a wedge of smile cracked the African's face and he fell to howling as well.

"So, Cornelius, this is how it is with you," Koestler said with a certain amount of amusement. "You have betrayed me as well." As the others continued to hoot and wail, Koestler remembered that his friend, Jules Hartman, the bush pilot, would be flying a pair of new American docs in later that day, and considered what a marvellous story this would make. He wanted to join in the fun, but as Babbitt began to masturbate, Koestler's impulse to laugh and give in to the moment was quickly vanquished by feelings of shame, anger, and real concern at the possibility of Babbitt's falling. Furthermore, it was his job to see that things didn't get out of control. An inch freely given around here quickly became the proverbial mile. The doctor raised his voice just slightly, insisting that the audience make a pile of leaves underneath the tree to break Babbitt's fall, which seemed all but inevitable. "*Mister* Johnson, see that this is done immediately," Koestler said. "I had better see heel-clicking service, do you hear me?"

Johnson wiped the smile from his face and began abusing the Africans. Soon a formidable pile of leaves had been gathered, but then Koestler, who was plotting the trajectory of the possible fall, was distracted when a small boy charged onto the scene and summoned the doctor to the clinic. A child had been bitten by a snake and was dying, the boy said. Koestler hastened back, the heavily laden pockets of his bush shorts jingling against his legs as he trotted alongside the young messenger, trying to get the boy to identify the type of snake responsible for the bite so he would be able to respond immediately with the appropriate dosage of antivenin, based on the victim's body weight, the bite pattern and location, the amount of edema present, and a number of other factors, including the possibility of shock. His alcohol-benumbed mind was soon clicking like a computer.

The child's father, tall, lean but regal in a pair of ragged khaki shorts—his ebony skin shiny with oily beads of perspiration and covered with a number of pinkish-white keloid scars—stood impassively outside the clinic with a hoe in one hand and a dead cobra in the other. The man muttered something about how the snake had killed his cow, how quickly the animal had fallen stone dead. In fact, he seemed more concerned about the dead animal than about his child, which, after all, was only a girl.

Inside the surgery, Sister Doris was already at work on the girl, who had been bitten twice on the left leg. Koestler assumed that the snake had deposited most of its neurotoxic venom in the cow; if the girl had not been bitten second she would have been as dead as the cow, since the snake was large and the girl was small and frail.

Koestler cautiously administered a moderate dose of antivenin, antibiotics, and Demerol for pain. Then he auscultated the child's chest. Her lungs sounded fine, but since the natives were enamored of hypodermic needles, he gave her a B_{12} shot—the magic bullet he used on himself to relieve hangovers. Before long the child's color improved, and only then did Koestler's thoughts return to Babbitt's latest caper. It seemed like an event that had happened in the distant past.

Mopping perspiration from his face, Koestler stepped outside and told the girl's father that his daughter was very

"Of course, your case against him would be a lot stronger if you had made him sign a pre-peccadillo agreement."

"You're sexy when you're wrong."

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strong, that the bite had been one of the worst Koestler had ever seen, and that the daughter was very special to have survived it. Actually, the little girl would probably have survived with no intervention whatever. But to survive a serious snakebite gave the victim unique status among the natives. Koestler hoped the father would now see his child in a new light, and that she would in fact have a better life from here on in. Sister Doris picked up on this and embellished the story until the crowd that had gone to witness Babbitt's debauchery had gathered outside the surgery to examine the dead snake and catch a glimpse of the young girl who would have unspecified powers and privileges for the rest of her life.

KOESTLER returned to the office in his small brick duplex—a mere hundred square feet cluttered with a large desk, five filing cabinets, books, whiskey bottles, medical paraphernalia, ashtrays, and a tricolored, fully assembled human skeleton. Koestler shook the last Dunhill from his pack and lit it. How long had it been since he had eaten last? He had a full-blown hangover now, and the cigarette, which tasted like Vicks VapoRub and cardboard, practically wasted him. He heard Johnson's feet flip-flopping along in an oversized pair of Clarks which Koestler had handed down to him, and looked out to see Johnson rushing toward the office, anxiously followed by a couple of boys who were carrying Babbitt toward the gazebo on a stretcher.

Koestler was not pleased. In the first place, Johnson had let the chickens burn in all the excitement, and now Koestler's fears about Babbitt were realized as he listened to the story of how the baboon had passed out and dropped from the tree with his arms tucked to his sides. He pictured the monkey falling like a black leaden weight, an oversized version of the Maltese Falcon. He would not tell Hartman of the incident, after all, since if he did he would never hear the end of the pilot's ridicule about Koestler's misplaced love for the absurd animal. Absurdity was a very big part of his life, even as he strove to attain a kind of nobility in spite of it. Koestler became completely fed up with Babbitt as Johnson explained that the animal was basically unhurt. Koestler wondered if he should get himself a dog for a pet, since every other creature on the planet seemed inclined to shun him. It must be some vibe he gave off, he thought. Beyond superficial relationships, he was alone. Even Hartman, once you got past the fun and games, did not really care one whit about him. Not really. My God, he felt vile! Koestler suddenly realized how his devotion to the monkey must have seemed to the staff: as inexplicable as he had found Philip Carey's pathetic, masochistic attachment to Mildred, the green-skinned waitress in "Of Human Bondage," a book he had read many years ago as a kid in Auckland, the very book that had pushed him into medicine and off to faraway tropical climes.

To be this much alone offered a vantage point from which he might look into the pit of his soul, but what good was that? How much truth could you bear to look at? Particularly if it left you a drunken sot. Koestler forked down a can of pink salmon; then, to clear his palate of fish, he chewed on stale twists of fried bread dusted with cinnamon and sugar while from his window he watched Johnson and the boys lift Babbitt onto the veranda of the gazebo, out of the sun. In a moment, Johnson was back in Koestler's office in his floppy pair of Clarks, so large on him they were like clown shoes.

"Him falling hard. Missing the falling nest altogether," Johnson exclaimed.

"Well," Koestler said with satisfaction, "you know how it is—God looks out after drunks and such. Maybe it will teach the bugger a lesson." Koestler fixed a Cuba libre and asked Johnson to salvage some of the overroasted chicken or run over to the kitchen and rustle up something else, depending on what the staff had been eating. According to Johnson, it had been hartebeest, which Koestler, as a rule, found too stringy. He told Johnson to smother some of it in horseradish and bring it anyway. That was about all you could do. There was a tinned rum cake he had been saving since Christmas. He could have that for dessert.

Koestler looked out his window as the sun flared on the horizon and sank behind a curtain of black clouds, plunging the landscape into darkness just as his generator kicked in and the bright lights in his office came on and his powerful air-conditioner began to churn lugubriously. He took a long pull on his drink, found another pack of cigarettes and lit one with a wooden match, and waited for the liquor to do its job. Johnson was slow on the draw. An African glacier. It was just as well. Koestler would have time to eradicate his hangover and establish a pleasant alcoholic glow by the time Johnson returned with the food. In the meantime, he got busy with paperwork—stuff that was so dull it could only be done under the influence. Hartman and the green docs were already overdue, and he knew he would be tied up with them once they got in. In the beginning, new physicians were always more trouble than they were worth, and then, when they finally knew what they were doing, they lost heart and returned to lucrative practices back home. The altruism of most volunteers, Koestler thought, was pretty thin. Those who stayed seemed to do so for reasons that were buried deep in the soul.

KOESTLER woke up at dawn feeling very fit, while Babbitt spent the morning in abject misery. He would retreat to the corner of the doctor's office and hold his head in his hands; then he would approach Koestler (who was busy at his desk), pull on the doctor's pant leg, and implore him for help. Koestler cheerfully abused the animal by uttering such clichés as "If you want to dance, Georgie, you have to pay the fiddler. Now stop pestering me," and "You've sold your soul to the Devil, and there's not a thing I can do for you! Are you happy with yourself now?"

When Koestler finished his paperwork, he showed the baboon some Polaroids he had taken of it vomiting in the night. "Look at you," he said. "This is utterly disgraceful. What would your mother think of this? I've got a good mind to send them to her."

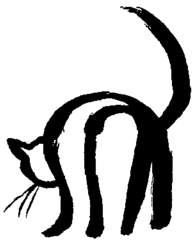
Babbitt abruptly left the room to guzzle water from a rain puddle but quickly returned when some Africans outside, who had witnessed the folly of the previous afternoon, began laughing derisively. He fled to his corner and held his head and, to Koestler's amazement, he was still there when the doctor came back to the room for a wash before dinner. The animal presented himself to Koestler like the prodigal son.

"I could fix it all with a shot, Georgie, but then you'll never learn, will you? Zip-A-Dee-Doo-Dah and out drunk again."

Babbitt buried his head in his hand and groaned mournfully.

Koestler finally took pity on him and gave him a B_{12} injection with five milligrams of amphetamine sulfate. In a half hour, Babbitt seemed as good as new, apart from a sore neck. The doctor took care of this by fixing Babbitt up with a small cervical collar cinched with Velcro. Koestler expected Babbitt to rip it off, but the animal was glad for the relief it provided. Koestler watched as Babbitt retreated to a hammock that hung in the gazebo under the baobab tree. In almost no time, he was sleeping peacefully. At the sight of Babbitt snoring in the absurd cervical collar, Koestler began to laugh, and he forgave his pet for most of the nonsense he had pulled during his drunken spree.

After Johnson served breakfast, Koestler took a stroll around the compound, barking orders at everyone in sight. The Africans ducked their heads submissively in his presence. Good, he had them cowed. He would ride them hard for a few weeks to reëstablish his absolute power. If he had given them their inch, he would get a yard back from them. When he stuck his head into the mission school for a minute, Brother Cole, who was demonstrating to the children how to write the letter "e" in cursive, took one look at the doctor and dropped his chalk. Koestler imagined that he saw the man's knees buckle. No doubt Father Stuart, with all his carping, had blown Koestler up into a bogeyman. He rarely showed himself at the school. The children whipped their heads around, and when they caught sight of the "big boss," their heads just as quickly whirled back. Koestler tersely barked, "Good morning, please continue. I'm just checking on things. Don't mind me." Ha! Feared by all.



By the time Koestler completed his Gestapo stroll, the compound was as quiet as a ghost town. He went into the clinic at nine, and with the help of the nurses completed over forty-five procedures by four-thirty. No record by any means, but a good day's work.

LATE that afternoon, Koestler took his dinner on the gazebo as usual and got drunk with Hartman and the two new young docs, who had spent the greater part of the day with the mission's administrator. Both Americans were shocked by the heat, the long flight, and, no doubt, by the interminable introductions to the staff and the singsong ramblings of that repetitive bore Father Stuart, who delighted in giving visitors a guided tour of the compound. The doctors seemed happy to be knocking back high-proof alcohol, and when Koestler fixed the usual bowl of banana mash and Canadian Mist before bridge, a number of rhesus monkeys rushed in from the jungle to accept the magical paste and soon were drunk and rushing around the compound fighting and copulating. Babbitt, who had ditched his cervical collar, was having none of the paste. The baboon seemed chastened and wiser. Koestler noted this with satisfaction and felt completely reconciled with his pet.

One of the newbies, a wide-eyed young doctor from Hammond, Indiana, said, "I see that the whole fabric of the social structure breaks down when they drink. It's like some grotesque parody of humans, but with none of the subtleties—just the elementals."

"It doesn't take Jane Goodall to see that," said Hartman. He had flown the Americans in that morning, and had got a head start on the Canadian Mist that afternoon. To Koestler's eye, the pilot appeared to be on the road to a mean, brooding drunk, rather than the more typical Hartman drunk—that of merriment, cricket talk, vaudeville routines, and bawdy songs. Koestler had recently run some blood work on his friend and knew that Hartman's liver was getting a little funny, but he could only bring himself to give Hartman a perfunctory warning and a bottle of B vitamins, since Koestler liked to match Hartman drink for drink when he made his twice-weekly drops at the mission and, as Koestler told Hartman, chastising him would seem like a ridiculous instance of the pot calling the kettle black. Like himself, Hartman was an old hand in Africa, and while he was not a Kiwi, he was close, having been raised in Launceston, Tasmania. Those pretentious types from mainland Australia looked down their noses on Taz, as they did on New Zealand—the poor sisters.

While Hartman had the typical apple cheeks and large ears that made Tasmanians look almost inbred, he liked to claim that he was Welsh. “May the Welsh rule the world!” he often said, but at other times he admitted that a year in Wales, with forays into much detested England, had been the most boring of his life. Whenever the subject came up, whether he was drunk or sober, the English were “Those bloody Pommy bastards!”

From the moment Babbitt had refused the alcohol mash, the doctor had been in a good mood, and now he began to pontificate. “As a rule, a baboon will only get drunk once, a monkey every day. Incredible animals, really, are baboons. Very smart. Did you know they can see in color? Actually, their visual powers are astounding.”

“What happened to its neck?” the young doctor from Hammond, Indiana, asked. “It keeps rubbing its neck.”

“It’s a long story,” Koestler replied. His cheerful countenance turned sour for a moment. “George Babbitt is a long-term experiment. He’s come from the heart of darkness to the sunshine of Main Street. My goal is to turn him into a full Cleveland.”

“What’s a full Cleveland?” Indiana asked.

“A full Cleveland is a polyester leisure suit, white-on-white tie, white belt, white patent-leather shoes, razor burn on all three chins, and membership in the Rotary Club and the Episcopal church.”

“You forgot the quadruple bypass,” the other newbie, who was from Chicago, said.

“Well, he’s got a running start there,” said Koestler.

The baboon had stationed himself between Hartman and Koestler. Hartman held the stump of a wet cigar in his hand and seemed poised to relight it. Babbitt was intent on his every move.

“Georgie smokes a half a pack of cigarettes a day,” Hartman said.

“*Used* to smoke—”

“Still does,” Hartman said. “Whatever he can mooch from the Africans.”

“Well, I’ll soon put an end to that,” said Koestler. “He’s getting fat and short-winded. His cholesterol is up there. How long has he been smoking this time, the bloody bugger? He’ll end up with emphysema, too. And how come I didn’t know about this? I used to know everything that went on around here! I’ve got to cut back on the juice.”

“Dain bramage,” said Hartman.

“It’s not funny,” Koestler said.

“What’s the normal cholesterol for a baboon?” Indiana asked. His cherubic face made him seem impossibly young.

“One-twenty or thereabouts,” Koestler replied. “I couldn’t even get a reading on his triglycerides—his blood congeals like cocoa butter.”

Indiana began to giggle. “Jeez, I still can’t believe that I’m in . . . Africa.”

“Tomorrow you will believe,” said Koestler. “You will voice regrets.”

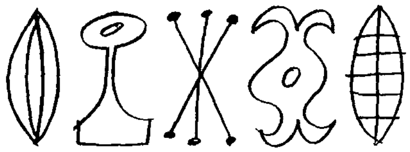
“I mean, I *know* I’m in Africa. I knew that when Mr. Hartman landed that DC-3. Talk about a postage-stamp runway—and those soldiers! Are those guns *loaded*?”

“That runway is a piece of cake,” Hartman said. “More than adequate. And the guns *are* loaded. The political situation is very uptight these days. Not that we can’t handle that; it’s just that it’s getting impossible to make a decent wage. I’ve got a good mind to sell the plane and head back to Oz. I’m getting too old for this caca.”

“You won’t last a week in Australia and you know it,” Koestler said. “All the oppression of civilization. Sydney’s getting almost as bad as Los Angeles. Every other bloody car is a Rolls or Jaguar. Not for you, my friend. You’ll have to put on a fucking necktie to take in the morning paper.”

“Darwin’s not so bad,” Hartman said, punching at a large black fly. “In Darwin an eccentric can thrive. Colorful characters. Crocodile Dundee and that sort of thing. I can make milk runs to New Guinea, do something—”

Suddenly Hartman seemed drunk, and he glowered at Indiana. “If you think this runway was crude, sonny boy, you’ve got a fuckin’ long way to go.” He sailed the half-empty bowl of banana mash into the wisteria bushes, and a few of the monkeys went after it, scrapping over the paste.



“Well, it wasn’t exactly O’Hare International,” Indiana said. “And how come the Africans sandbagged the tires?”

“To stop the hyenas from eating them,” Koestler said. “It’s hell to procure tires in these parts. “

“Eating tires?” Indiana said. “You’re shitting me!”

“The object of our little get-together is to ease you into your new reality,” Koestler said. “If you get hit with everything too fast, it can overwhelm. Tomorrow will be soon enough. The leper colony—a rude awakening.”

“What kind of scene is that?” the young doctor from Chicago asked. He was a dark man, with a hawk nose and a thick head of hair as black and shiny as anthracite; he was short, muscular, and had copious body hair. Koestler took him to be about thirty.

“It’s a bit smelly. Poor buggers. Pretty much Old Testament, if you know what I mean. Your leper is still the ultimate pariah. In the beginning, there’s ‘gloves and stockings’ anesthesia, and in the end, if we can’t interrupt the course of the disease, a great deal of pain. They only believe in needles—they love needles. So use disposables and destroy them. That’s the first rule. The second rule is this—if you have a patient who requires one unit of blood, do not give it to him. If he requires two units of blood, do not give it to him. If he requires three units of blood, you will have to give it to him, but remember that that blood will most likely be contaminated with H.I.V., hepatitis B, and God knows what all, despite the assurances from above.”

“AIDS—slim,” Hartman said evenly. “The only safe sex is no sex. Do not even accept a hand job.”

“I’ve heard that they take great offense if you don’t eat with them,” Indiana said. “I’ve heard they’ll put the evil eye on you if you don’t eat with them.”

“It’s true,” Koestler said.

“So you eat with them?”

“Hell no! I don’t get involved with them on a personal level. You cannot let your feelings get in your way. If you do, you will be useless. Move. Triage. Speed is the rule. You’ll see the nurses doing things that your trauma docs can’t handle back in the States. Hell, you’ll see aides doing some very complicated work. It comes down to medical managing. The numbers defeat you.”

Johnson came out to the gazebo bearing a tray of chilled coconut puddings. He set a dish next to each of the men and then began to light the Coleman lanterns and mosquito coils as the sun did its orange flare and fast fade into the horizon. As it disappeared, Koestler said, "Thank God. Gadzooks! Sometimes too hot the eye of heaven shines, huh boys? Especially when you're smack-dab on the equator."

The new men said nothing but watched as, one by one, Johnson picked up the last of the drunken rhesus monkeys by their tails and flung them as far as he could before padding back to the kitchen.

Indiana looked out at the monkeys staggering in circles. "They don't know what to do—come back for more or go into the jungle."

"Those that make for the bush the leopard gets. It's one way to eradicate the bastards," said Koestler darkly.

"I see—method behind the madness," Chicago said.

"Johnson's been using his skin bleach again," Hartman observed. "He's gone from redbone to high yellow in a week. Wearing shoes, yet. The Eagle Flies on Friday Skin Pomade for some Sat'day-night fun."

"It's not only Saturdays," Koestler said. "He goes through two dozen condoms a week. His hut is littered with the wrappers. He's insatiable."

"Well, at least you got that part through to him. Use a rubber."

"Johnson is no dummy, Jules. He knows the score, believe me. He's very germ conscious. That's one thing. A compulsive handwasher. I trust him with my food absolutely."

As Indiana spooned down the pudding, he looked nervously at Hartman, who was a bulky man, and was glowering at him. "What's this 'redbone, high yellow' stuff?" Indiana said.

Hartman said nothing and continued to stare at the young doctor. Indiana looked at the other men and then laughed, "Hey! What's with this guy?"

Chicago picked up his pudding and began to eat. "And now for something completely different," he said. "The evil eye."

Hartman's face brightened. He relaxed his shoulders and laughed softly. "I remember a doctor—an American, tropical medic—didn't believe in the superstitions, and in the course of things he humiliated a witch doctor. The old boy put a curse on this hotshot, and it wasn't more than a week before the American stepped on a snake. I had to fly him to Jo'burg, since he was really messed up, was this chap. A year, fourteen months later he's back, forty pounds lighter, and a rabid animal bites him on the second day in. It took us three weeks to get rabies vaccine, and it came from a dubious source. He took the full treatment, but came down with the disease anyhow. Bitten on the face. Travels to the brain faster. Funny thing about rabies—makes a bloke restless. Nothing to do for it, either. Dr. Koestler, Johnson, and I had to lock him up in one of those chain-link-fenced compartments in the warehouse."

"Excessive scanning," Koestler said. "Hypervigilance. You could see the whites of his eyes—"

"From top to bottom," Hartman said. "Very paranoid, drinking in every sight and sound."

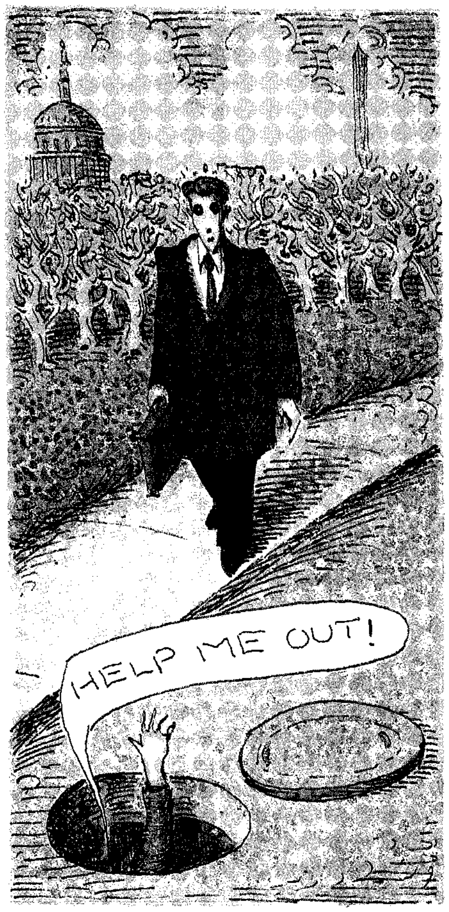
"What made it worse," Koestler said, "was the fact that he knew his prognosis."

"Yeahrr," said Hartman. "The paranoiac isn't necessarily wrong about things—he just sees too much. Take your hare, for instance. Your hare is a very paranoid animal. Your hare has basically been placed on the planet as food. He doesn't have a life. When you are an instant meal, you are always on the lookout. So, paranoid. Well, our friend was a lion, which all doctors are, present company included—they're tin gods from Day One—and, while it may work in America, it doesn't cut any ice down here; he humiliated this old witch doctor, so there wasn't any way out. No need to go around asking for trouble in this life, is there? The hare sees too much, the lion not enough—and there's the difference between happiness and hell, provided you are a real and true lion, not some bloody fool who is misinformed."

Hartman had the fleshy, broken nose of a pug, and as he spoke he kept brushing at it with his thumb. He sneezed three times in rapid succession.

"The curious thing," Koestler said, "is that the stupid bleeder died professing belief in science. He had a little slate and a piece of chalk, and when we finally went in to remove the body, I read his last words: *Amor fati!* 'Love your fate.' A stubborn bloody fool."

"Wow," Indiana said. "What did



you do for the guy? Did he just die?"

"Of course he died. 'Slathered like a mad dog' is no mere cliché, let me tell you. I was inexperienced back then and had to play it by ear. All you had to do was say the word 'water' and he had esophageal spasms. You try to anticipate the symptoms and treat them, but we just aren't equipped here. The brain swells, you see, and there's no place for it to go."

Koestler accidentally bumped his pudding onto the floor with his elbow, and Babbitt quickly stepped forward and scooped it up in neat little handfuls.

Indiana picked up his dessert and tasted another spoonful. "This is good."

"Good for a case of the shits. Did you boys bring in any paregoric?"

"Lomotil," Chicago said. "Easier to—"

"Transport," Hartman said, picking up a greasy deck of cards and dealing them out for bridge.

"Mix it with Dilaudid and it will definitely cure diarrhea," Koestler said.

"You got some cholera in these parts?" Chicago said. He was beginning to sound like an old hand already.

"No," Koestler said vacantly. "Just the routine shits." He picked up his cards and fanned through them.

As Indiana finished his pudding, Johnson padded back out to the gazebo with a bowl of ice, another quart of Canadian Mist, and four cans of Coke Classic.

"I had this patient call me up at three in the morning," Indiana said.

"*Called the doctor, woke him up,*" Chicago recited.

Indiana said, "Hypochondriac. Right. She's got lower GI pain. Diarrhea. Gas. The thing is—she's switched from Jell-O pudding to Royal pudding.

"*Doctor, what can I take?*" Chicago sang.

"I said, 'Delilah, remember how you— Delilah, I don't think you have a ruptured appendix. Delilah! Remember when you switched from RC Cola to Pepsi?' "

THE EQUINOCTIAL DISTURBANCES

the gusts and gutterings
will have given way
to hovering particles of the
great blank the colorless
all-color

looked out upon the snowlit
iron memorials
enclose a rumor of
already undergone
rehearsals

the putting off
of ordinary deprivations
to be enrobed as for
a festival in
the same dazzle

as (O splendor of re-
appearances) the streamside
bloodroot the whitening
cherry trees along
the park drive

cheekily eloquent
even the livid
roadside comedian flicks
its chevrons' white
the wingpatch

a mime of those
prodigious beckonings
one somehow (how?)
might rise to the
occasion of

Pain Management arrives
dressed all in green
a rosebud in (can morphine
have invented this?)
its buttonhole

Oncology a gibbet-habitat
of poles and catheters is home
to the bald woman who cannot
close her eyes at night
for looking

past it past anything
TV's nightlong laugh riot
is not aware (how
could it be?) her
sleeplessness

may not outlast
the equinoctial
disturbances the transitory
obbligato
of the snow

—Amy Clampitt

"*Doctor—to relieve this bellyache,*" Chicago sang.

"I said, 'Put the lime in the coconut. Yeah, it does sound kind of *nutty*. That's good. Now, haven't you got a lime? You've got lime juice. One of those little green plastic lime things? O.K., that's good, now listen closely—*You put de lime in de coconut an' shake it all up; put de lime in de coconut and you drink it all down.* Trust me, Delilah, an' call me in de morning.' "

"And she never called back," Hartman said soberly. "Very clever."

"Let me get this straight," Koestler said. "You put de lime in de coconut?"

"Yeahrrr," said Hartman. "Jolly good."

"It's not bad, but that's his only routine," Chicago said. "I've spent seventy-two hours with the man, and that's it. That's his one trick. Plus, he's a fuckin' Cubs fan."

"Hey," Indiana said. "Long live Ernie Banks! Speaking of weird, we brought in three cases of sardines," Indiana said. "What's with all the sardines?"

"They are an essential out in the bush," Koestler said, removing a can of King Oscar sardines from his pocket and shucking the red cellophane wrapping. "Look at that, a peel-back can. No more bloody key. It's about time."

Hartman said, "They've only been canning sardines for ninety years."

Koestler jerked the lid back and helped himself to a half-dozen fish, his fingers dripping with oil. "Why, Jules, don't take personal offense. I'm sure His Majesty has enough on his mind without worrying about zip-open cans." Koestler offered the tin around, and when everyone refused, he gave the rest of the fish to Babbitt. "King Oscar sardines are worth more than Marlboro cigarettes in Africa," he declared.

"King Oscar, the nonpareil sardine," Chicago said.

Indiana filled his bourbon glass with Coke, Canadian Mist, and a handful of ice cubes, which melted almost instantly.

Hartman fixed his hard stare on young Indiana. "What exactly brought you to Africa, sonny boy?"

"I came to serve humanity, and already I'm filled with a sense of the inexplicable. I can't believe I'm in Africa. And fuck you very much."

"Speak up. You sound like a bloody poof—'I came to serve humanity,' " Hartman said.

"And you sound like a major asshole. Why don't you try a little anger-management training?"

"Bloody poof, I knew it. Nancy girl!"

"Fuck!" Indiana said. "You're drunk. I'm not even talking to you."

"Won't last a week. Mark my words," Hartman said.

"Tomorrow you will believe," Koestler said. "The leper colony."

"Separates the men from the boys," said Hartman.

"Way down deep in the jungle," said Chicago, "we have the leper colony. We have Hansen's disease. That which we call leprosy by any other name would smell just as sweet: indeterminate leprosy, tuberculoid leprosy, lepromatous leprosy, dimorphous leprosy. 'What's in a name?' "

To Koestler's astonishment, Chicago pulled out a fat joint and torched it up. He took a long drag and passed it to the other American.

"I did a rotation at the leprosarium in Carville, Louisiana, when I was in the Navy," Chicago said. "I learned how to understand the prevailing mentality of the patient suffering from Hansen's disease."

"Put yourself in their 'prosthetic' shoes, did you?" Hartman said.

"The kid's right," Chicago said. "You're a hostile person. A real live turd. Shut up and listen. I mean, these patients are in denial until a white coat gives it to them straight. Zombie denial, man. You should see the look on their face. It's not a look like you've got cancer, which is a good one, instant shock. The you've-got-Hansen's look is more like, 'I have of late—but wherefore I know not—lost all my mirth—' "

"I know that look," Koestler said. "I see it every morning whilst I shave. Jules, the man knows Shakespeare."

"I suppose a leper colony in Africa is a hut made out of buffalo shit—"

"In your leper colony over there in the States," Hartman said, "are all the lepers bloody nigs?"

"You really are a racist, aren't you?" Indiana said.

Koestler attempted to deflect this inquiry. "I believe the current phraseology is 'African-American,' Jules, or, if you must, 'black.' "

"Some are black. Some are white. Some are Hispanic," Chicago said. "That word of yours is not in my vocabulary, and if you say it again—"

"You'll what?"

"Jules, please," said Koestler. "Don't be bloody uncouth."

Hartman pitched his head forward and pretended to sob over his cards. "I'm an uncouth ruffian, I won't deny it." He gulped down some whiskey and said, "When that faggot over there wants to fly home for ballet lessons, it won't be in my plane."

"Aryan Brotherhood," Indiana said.

Koestler raised his hand to silence the doctor while he turned on Chicago. "Where on earth did you score that joint?" he asked. "Did you give it to them, Jules?"

"Actually, it was your man, Johnson," Indiana said. "God, am I ever high. Everything is so . . . surreal."

"Johnson? That bugger!" Koestler said. "He's got his hand in everything."

Koestler put the wet end of the joint to his lips and took a tentative puff. As he did, Chicago pulled out another and lit it.

"Fuck," Koestler said. He took another hit. A much bigger one.

Chicago handed the new joint to Koestler's baboon, who greedily inhaled the smoke, and for the next few moments the whole curious party sat around the table attempting to suppress coughs.

"I'm so fucking high," Indiana said. "Jesus."

"A minute ago *I* was drunk; now *you* can't tie your shoelaces," Hartman said. "Poofter!"

"Let's have a little music," said Koestler. He flipped on the shortwave and fiddled with the dial. "I have got nothing but bloody Radio Ireland recently, half Gaelic, and then an hour of bird calls! Needs a new battery." He slapped at the radio and then, with Dixieland accompaniment, an Irish tenor was singing, *"I've flown around the world in a plane—"*

Koestler joined in. *"I've settled revolutions in Spain—"*

He flipped the dial and slapped the set until he hooked into American Armed Forces Radio. After an announcer listed the major-league ball scores, Jimi Hendrix came on blaring "Red House."

The men sat back and listened to the music. Koestler popped up to turn up the volume, his weather-beaten face collapsing inward as he took in another draught of marijuana smoke, closed his eyes, tossed his head back, and got into the song. He was soon snaking about the duckboard floor of the gazebo, playing air guitar to the music, his face frozen in a look of mock ecstasy.

"Hey, if Father Stuart could only see us now," Hartman said.

"Father Stuart *can* see you now!" The priest flipped on an electric torch and stepped out of the darkness up onto the gazebo. "This is a hospital, not a fraternity house! Kindly remember that. People are trying to sleep. Can't you think of others for a change?" He turned to the new doctors. "I'm glad to see that you two lads are off to an auspicious beginning."

The priest, dressed in a bathrobe and flip-flops, picked up the shortwave, switched it off, slung it under his arm, and clopped back toward the lodge. The beam of his flashlight, which was tucked between his shoulder and chin, panned the wisteria bushes, the ground, the sky, and the buildings of the compound as he attempted to push down the telescopic antenna on the radio. For a moment, the men sat in stunned silence. This was followed by an explosion of laughter.

Koestler started up as if to go after the priest, but then thought better of it and sat down at the table. He reached into his bush shirt and removed another can of sardines, handing them to Babbitt, who quickly tore off the lid, ate the fish, and then licked the olive oil from the inside of the can. "You might not believe it, but Georgie can open a can of sardines even with a key," Koestler said proudly.

"Fuck, he's got the munchies," Indiana said, as he fell into a paroxysm of laughter.

Chicago studied the red sardine jacket, giggling as he read: "Add variety and zest to hot or cold meatless main dishes. . . . By special royal permission. Finest Norway brisling sardines."

"Brisling?"

"It's that advertising thing," Chicago said. "Brisling is Norwegian for 'sprat,' which means small marine fish. Not each and every small fish you pull in is certifiably a herring; some other small fish get picked up by the school. No false advertising this way."

"Wow," Indiana said sardonically. "Are you Norwegian or something?"

"Lebanese," Chicago said. "I already told you that."

Indiana said, "Who runs that country, anyhow? I was there, and I don't know that much. All I remember is that they won't even give you the time of day."

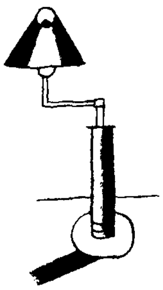
"No way," Chicago said. "The people are friendly as hell. The government of Norway is a hereditary constitutional monarchy, a parliamentary democracy, and the king is endowed with a certain amount of executive power. In reality, however, the king is limited in the exercise of power."

"He's a Norway freak!" Indiana said.

"More likely he's got a photographic memory," Hartman said.

"Touché, Mr. Hartman," Chicago said.

"I still can't believe I'm in Africa," Indiana said. "Heavy. Fourteen-year-old kids with machine guns—and, my God, look at the stars. There are so many of them."



"Stop acting so fucking incredulous," Hartman said. "You're really getting on my nerves."

"Watch Sister Doris," Koestler said. "She's forgotten more about jungle medicine than I'll ever know."

"Doris? Man, she's unattractive. She's ugly, man," Indiana said.

"She'll be looking pretty good in about five months; that is, if you last that long," Hartman said. "You'll be having some pretty intensive fantasies about that woman. Are you going to last, sonny boy?"

"Fuck off. I got through a residency at Bellevue. I guess I can hack Africa."

"The thing about Doris," Koestler said, slicing the air with the edge of his hand, "is that she's what we call an A-teamer. The A-team takes all of this business seriously. Tight-asses. Father Stuart is A-team beaucoup. There are B-teamers, who take a more casual approach. You will line up with one of these factions. Personally, if the political thing doesn't ease up a bit, I'm going to boogie out of this hellhole. I've no desire to have my throat slit. Stuart and Doris will stay until the last dog is hung."

"Go back to Kiwiland and listen to them harp about All Blacks rugby and that bloody yacht trophy," Hartman said. "Family's gone. Africa's your home, man."

"I've got a few cousins left in Auckland, and I do miss New Zealand beer, rather," Koestler said. "I'm not going to hang around and get my throat cut. I'd rather try a little lawn bowling."

"The natives are restless?" Indiana said.

"Yes, Percy le Poof," Hartman said. "The natives are restless."

"Politics as usual. So far, it hasn't filtered down to the villages," Koestler said. "It's a lot safer here than in Newark, New Jersey, I would imagine."

Suddenly the men fell silent and examined their cards. A swarm of insects buzzed around the gazebo like a wall of sound.

Despite the mosquito coils, the insects attacked ferociously. Hartman was the first to hop up, and he moved with a quickness that startled the others. With no warning, he roughly grabbed Indiana's head in the crook of his muscular forearm and savagely rubbed his knuckles over the top of the young doctor's head. His feet shuffled adroitly, like those of a fat but graceful tap dancer, as he yanked the doctor in various directions, never letting him set himself for balance. Hartman ran his knuckles back and forth over the young man's crew cut, crying, "*Haji Baba!* Hey, hey! *Haji Baba!* Hey, hey!"

"Ouch, God damn!" Indiana shouted. He was tall, with a basketball-player's build, and he finally wrested himself out of Hartman's powerful grip. He stood his ground, assuming a boxer's pose. Both he and Hartman were suddenly drenched with sweat. "You fucker! Shit!"

Hartman threw his hands in the air, his palms open in a gesture of peace. As soon as Indiana dropped his guard, Hartman waded in throwing roundhouse punches. One of these connected, and a chip of tooth pankled off a can of Coke Classic on the table. Indiana pulled Hartman forward, going with the older man's momentum. At the same time, he kicked Hartman's feet out from under him, and the two men rolled off the gazebo, and Indiana rode astride Hartman's broad back like a cowboy. Indiana had Hartman's arm pulled up in a chicken wing with one hand while he felt for his missing front tooth with the other.

"You son of a bitch!" Indiana said. "Fat bastard." He pounded Hartman's large ears with the meaty side of his fist. "I'll show you who's a faggot. How do you like it?"

He continued to cuff the pilot and cranked the arm up higher until Hartman cried, "Oh God, stop!"

"Had enough? Had enough?"

"God, yes. God, yes. I give!"

Indiana released his grip and got up. He was covered with black dirt. He was studying an abrasion on his knee when Hartman leaped atop him pickaback and began clawing at his face.

Hartman cried, "Son of a bitch, I'll kill you!" Once again the two men began rolling about in the dirt. This time Hartman emerged on top, and his punches rained down on the younger man until Chicago and Koestler each snatched him by one of his arms and dragged him off and flung him back into his chair. He started to get up, but Koestler shoved him back down with both hands and then pointed a finger in his face.

"You're drunk. Knock this shit off immediately!"

Hartman clutched his chest and panted frantically, wheezing. Rivulets of sweat coated with black dust rolled down off his face and dropped on his lap like oily pearls. Koestler poured out a large glass of whiskey and handed it to Hartman, who said, "Oh, fuck!"

Indiana stood over the man as if he were contemplating taking a swing at him. Hartman seemed unconcerned.

"Just having a bit of fun is all," Hartman said agreeably. "Didn't mean anything by it." Indiana drew away from Hartman, who managed the entire glass of whiskey in three gulps. "I believe all that marijuana got me going. No offense intended. Apologies all around."

Hartman took a mashed cigar out of his pocket, twisted off the broken end, and lighted it. He puffed rapidly without inhaling and wafted the smoke in front of his face to clear away the mosquitoes. Then he pulled himself up, set his glass on the table, and said, "It's been a long day, and here I am, shitfaced again. Good night, all."

Hartman hastily made his way up the path toward the sleeping quarters beyond the surgery. As he went, he laughed again and repeated the famous Monty Python litany, "And now for something completely different—sawing logs. Ah, zzzzz! Ah, zzzzz! Ah, zzzzz!"

Indiana turned to Koestler. "What is with that guy?"

"Don't mind Jules. He's a jolly good fellow. You'll grow to love him. And he won't remember a thing about tonight. Blackout drunk, this—presumably. I might not remember any of it, either."

From the distance, an elephant blared, a big cat roared, the hyenas began their freakishly human wailing, and the whole cacophony of jungle sounds took over the night.

Was it a minute or an hour later that Babbitt hopped on Hartman's empty chair and seemed to beseech the cardplayers to deal him in? The men had drifted off into their separate thoughts. Babbitt grabbed the bottle of Canadian Mist from the card table and, brandishing sharp canine teeth that shone like ivory in the glow of the Coleman lanterns, caused both the young doctors to duck to the floor before he quickly sprang off into the black jungle. Even Koestler hit the deck, wrenching his knee. When he got up, he brushed himself off and said, "That settles it, I'm getting myself a dog."

"Christ, that's one mean son of a bitch!" said Chicago. "And I thought you said a baboon will only get drunk once. Here I thought he was poised to go for that goat-shit cigar. I mean, so much for your full Cleveland."

"Georgie is not your average baboon," Koestler said with a shrug. "Especially when he's stoned. When you've got a stoned baboon, all bets are off."

Indiana looked at Koestler. "What are we going to do? Are we going after him?"

"Not likely—anyhow, you need to clean up. Put something on those scratches. They can go septic overnight in this climate."

"But the leopard."

"Not to worry. I'll send Johnson and some of the men out with flashlights and shotguns. I'm absolutely fried from that joint. I'm not going out there—although we have to do something about that cat. He's getting altogether too bold, and we have children about. I'm going to have to roust Johnson. Anyhow, welcome to the B-team, gentlemen—Har har! Try to get some sleep. Tomorrow is going to be a rather difficult . . . a rather gruesome . . . well, shall I say, it won't be your typical day at the office? Up at dawn and that sort of thing." Koestler tossed back the last of his drink. "Rude awakening, the leper colony. Not for the faint of heart."

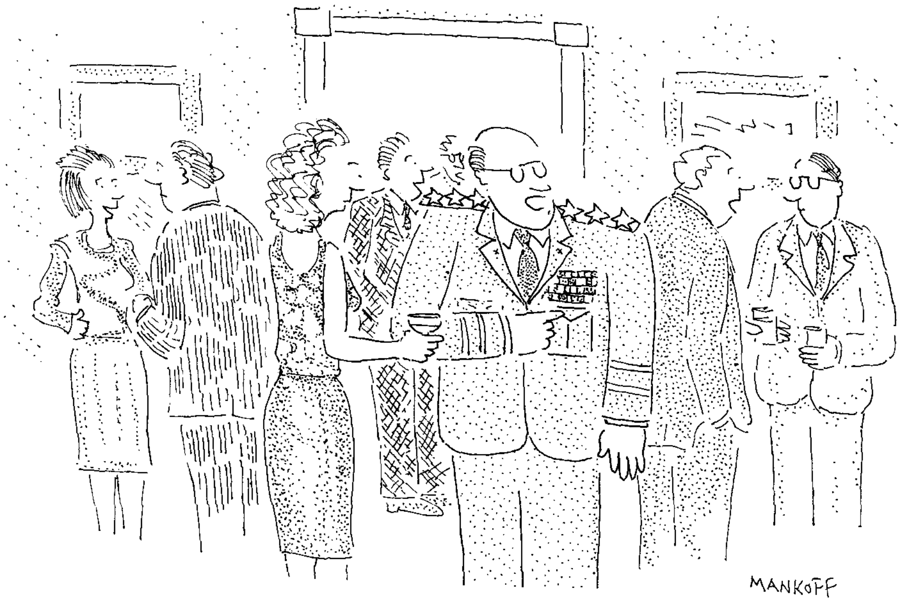
The young doctors grimly nodded an affirmation as Koestler made a pretense of cleaning up around the card table. He watched the two men stumble back to their rooms in the dorm, and when they were out of sight, he picked up one of the fat roaches that were left over from their party. He lit it with his Ronson and managed to get three good tokes off it. He heard the leopard out in the bush.

Who was it? Stanley? Was it Sir Henry Morton Stanley who had been attacked by a lion, shaken into shock, and who later reported that he had felt a numbness that was a kind of bliss—a natural blessing for those creatures who were eaten alive? Not a bad way to go. Of course, leopards were smaller. Slashers.

Koestler picked up Indiana's drink, which was filled to the brim; it was warm, and the Coke in it had gone flat. It didn't matter. There seemed to be a perfect rightness to everything. That was the marijuana. Well, what difference did it make? It was his current reality. When he finished the whiskey, Koestler got up and clicked on his small chrome-plated penlight and followed its narrow beam into the bush. The beam was just long enough to allow him to put one foot in front of the other. Finding Babbitt would be almost impossible. *Amor fati.* Choose the right time to die. Well, there was no need to overdramatize; he was just taking a little midnight stroll. The leopard, unless it was crazy, would run from his very smell.

As soon as Koestler got under the jungle canopy, the air temperature fell ten degrees. The bush smelled damp and rotten. Yet, for the first time in thirty years, Koestler felt at one with the jungle. A little T-Bone Walker blues beamed in from some remote area of the brain: *They call it Stormy Monday, but Tuesday's just as bad.*

At the sound of Koestler's heavy boots, the nocturnal rustlings of the bush grew still. Koestler could then hear drums from the nearby village. There had been an elephant kill. Somehow his peripheral awareness had picked up on that news at some point during this most incredible day. Elephant kill. House of meat. Cause for celebration. The doctor proceeded into the darkness. The penlight seemed to dim; were the batteries low? Beneath the sound of the drumbeats, Koestler heard a branch snap. He stood stock-still in the middle of it all. He flipped his penlight right and left, and in a low, piping voice, said, "Georgie, Georgie? Where are you, my little pal? Why don't you come on back home? Come back home to Daddykins." ♦



"And this is my pocket."

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LANDMARKS

TO THE PENNSYLVANIA STATION

Penn Station was once a glorious gateway to the city. With Senator Moynihan's help, it may be again.

BY SIDNEY BLUMENTHAL

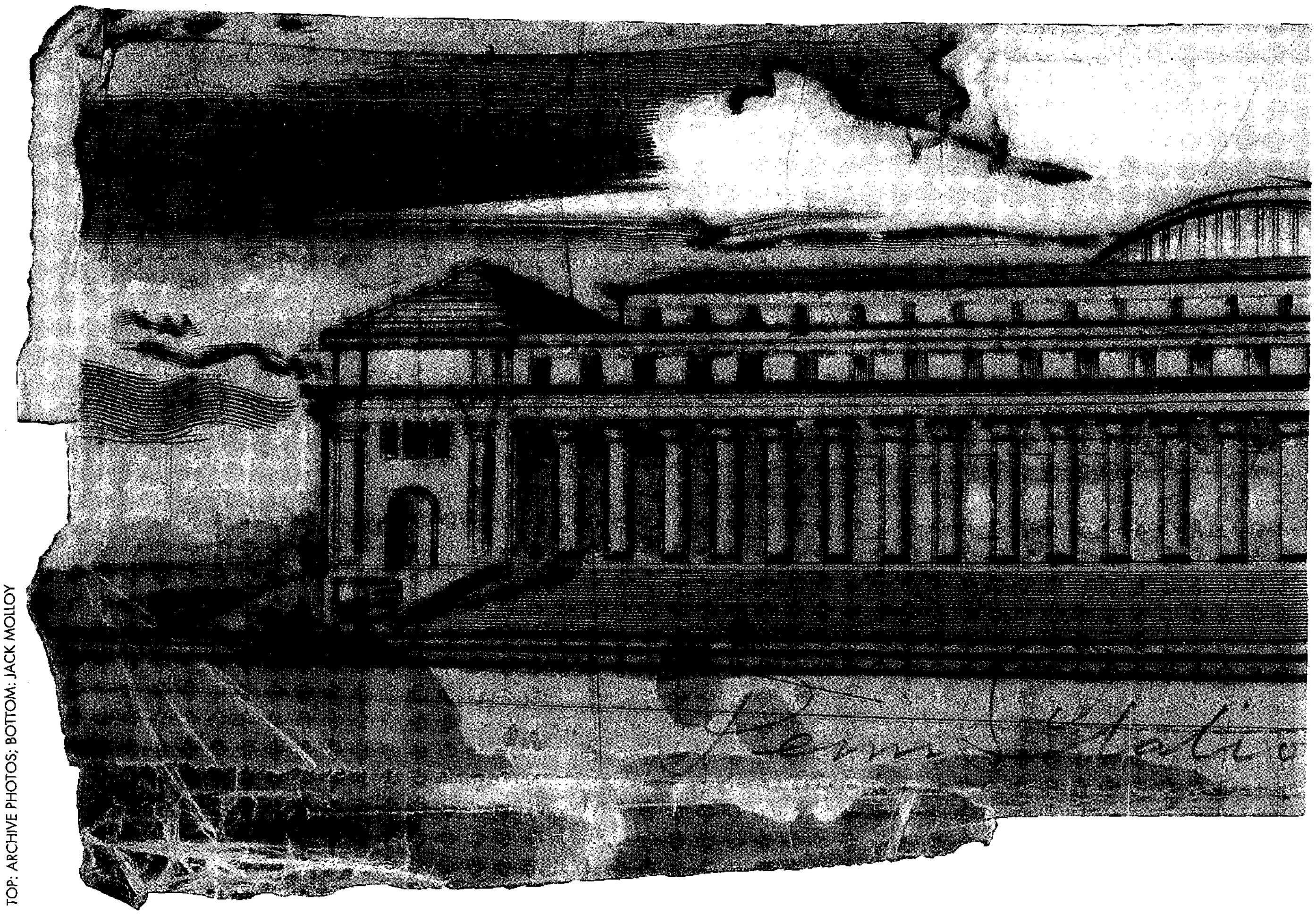
WASHINGTON

A COUPLE of blocks from the Russell Building, where Daniel Patrick Moynihan, the senior senator from New York, has his offices, stands Union Station. Once so decrepit that he could see trees growing on its roof, it is now a gleaming masterpiece. Moynihan was instrumental in securing the funding that has transformed it from neglected eyesore to sandblasted glory. It is only a three-hour train ride to Pennsylvania Station in New York. One end of the trip has already been touched by Moynihan's restorative impulse, and the other is about to be. Just as he envisioned a new Union Station when it had literally gone to seed, he now sees a new Penn Station.

Ever since his election to the Senate, in 1976, Moynihan has been its resident intellectual, gadfly, and prophet. He has earned a certain deference from his colleagues, although they tend to regard him as inhabiting a universe of his own. They do not always grasp the point of his extended remarks, and frequently he does not seem to focus on their less exalted interests and expedients. But with the election of 1992 the seniority system of the Senate, operating according to its peculiar Newtonian mechanics, ratcheted Moynihan up to the chairmanship of the Finance Committee. Time does wait for some men; in fact, time is one of the chief instruments of influence within the Senate. And now that Moynihan is chairman of the Finance Committee, through which all tax bills flow, it is hardly surprising that the matter of re-creating Penn Station is receiving attention.

"There are images that stay in your mind," Moynihan said recently. "They tore down the station and dumped it in the Jersey meadows. Some photographer got an image of the debris, with the Manhattan skyline visible through the columns. And you thought, *What did we do*?" He was, of course, referring to the old Penn Station, designed by McKim, Mead & White and completed in 1910, and destroyed in 1963.

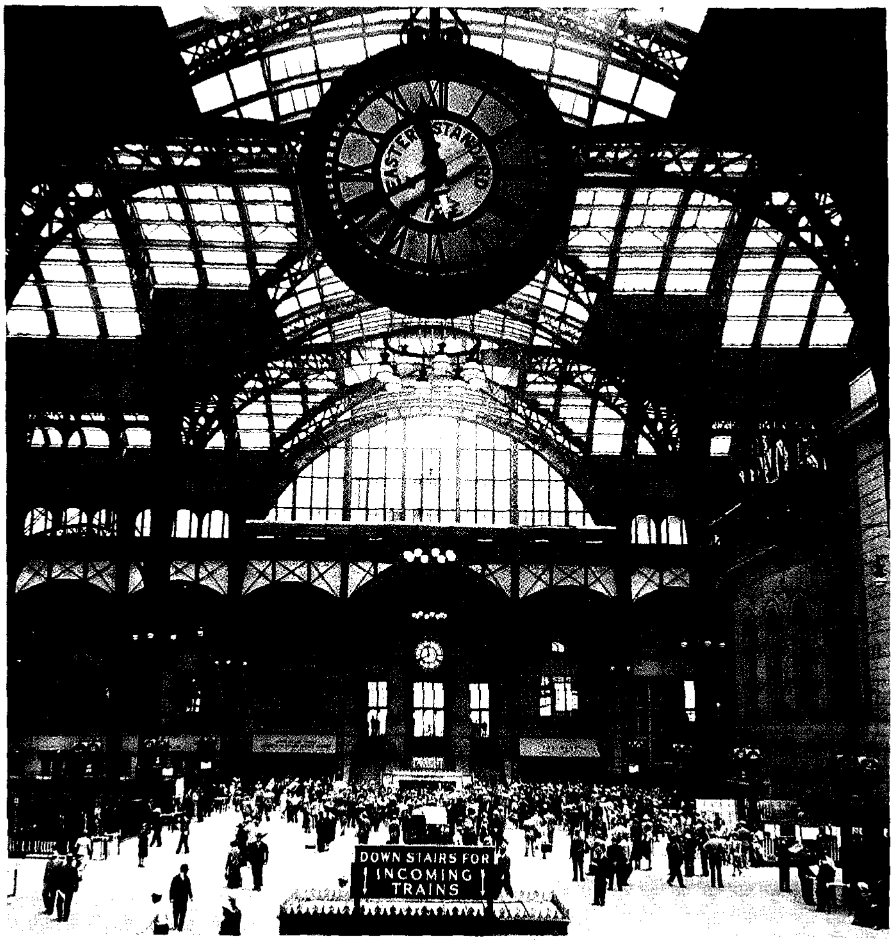
New York's first World's Fair, on the

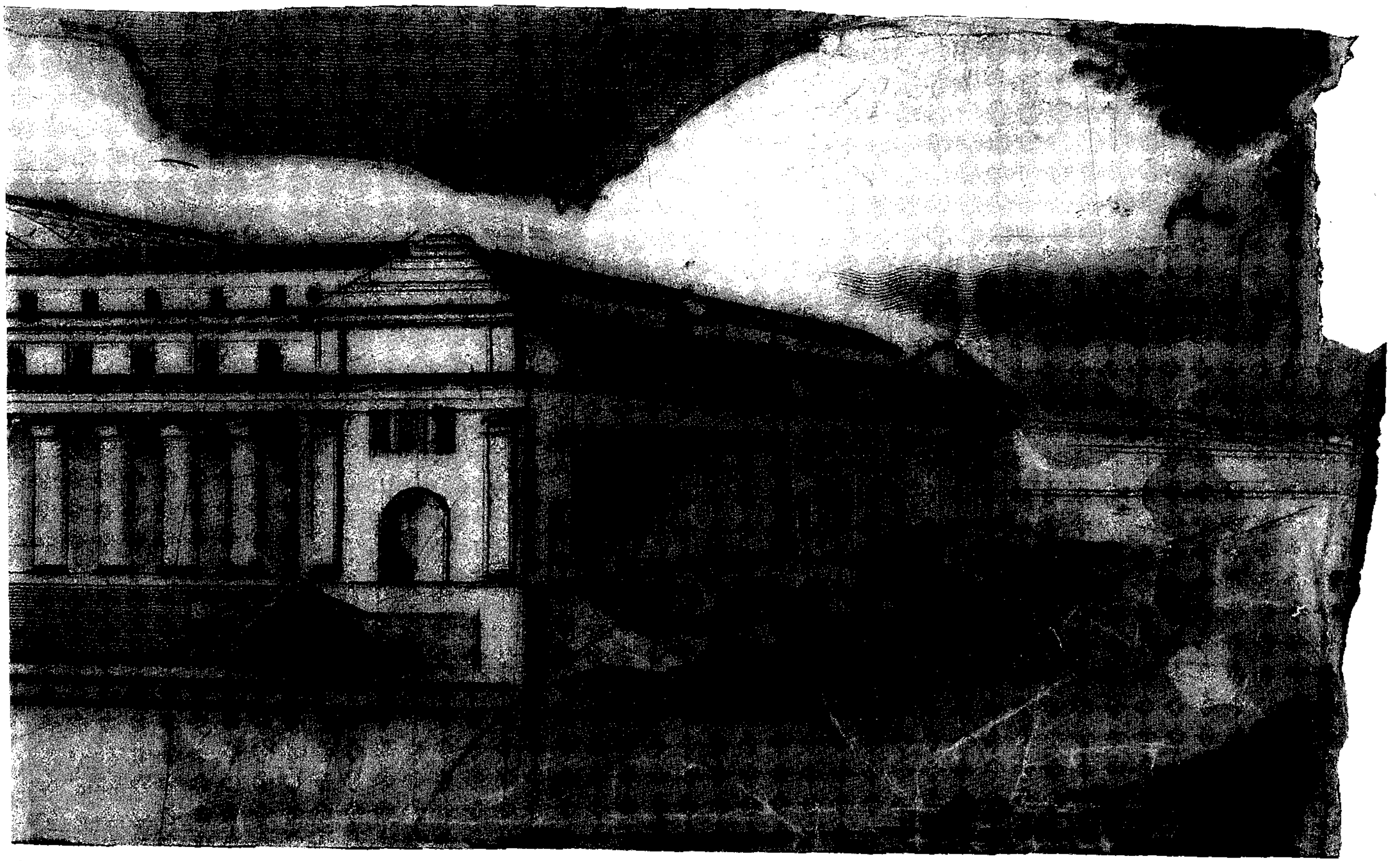


TOP: ARCHIVE PHOTOS; BOTTOM: JACK MOLLOY

eve of the Second World War, featured a portent of doom for the railroads. The most spectacular exhibit was the Futurama, sponsored by General Motors, in which visitors were smoothly whisked through the world of tomorrow—a world of superhighways. Moynihan recalled sneaking into the fair as a kid, and being awed by G.M.'s presentation. Between the mid-forties and the mid-sixties, the annual number of railroad journeys fell from nearly eight hundred million to fewer than three hundred million. Train stations were no longer temples of progress but decaying mausoleums. "We let the railroads down," Moynihan said. Penn Station's owner, the Pennsylvania Railroad, decided to sell the air rights of the land on which it stood; the station was condemned.

"New York City has never got over tearing down Penn Station," Moynihan went on. "It was a joy coming up from Norfolk as a young ensign"—this was the late forties—"and arriving there. You want to get that quote from Vincent Scully"—the eminent emeritus professor of art history at Yale. "One entered the city like a god," Scully wrote in "American Architecture and Urban-





The main concourse of Charles McKim's 1910 station, top right, and an artist's exterior rendering of Hellmuth, Obata, & Kassabaum's plans for remodelling McKim's 1914 General Post Office Building as a new Penn Station.

ism," in 1969. "One scuttles in now like a rat."

The new station had been completed the year before; eight years later, Amtrak assumed ownership from the bankrupt Penn-Central Railroad (the last incarnation of the Pennsylvania Railroad). During the nineteen-eighties, Amtrak spent nearly thirty million dollars on improvements. But Amtrak officials did not delude themselves into believing that cosmetic surgery would ever lift Penn Station's face out of ugliness. Besides, about forty per cent of all Amtrak passenger traffic passes through Penn Station, and, with New Jersey Transit, Long Island Rail Road, and subway passengers, the growth in the station's use was straining its limits. "We would reach pedestrian gridlock just after the turn of the century," Donald J. Pross, Amtrak's director of real-estate development, said. In 1989, the Amtrak board began drawing up a master plan.

As that plan was nearing completion, Amtrak learned that by 1994 space would be available across Eighth Avenue in the James A. Farley Building—the old United States General Post Office, which was also designed by McKim, Mead & White, and opened to the public in 1914. Underneath it run tracks and platforms that extend and expand what exists at Penn Station. A remedy for the historic grievance had presented itself.

In May, 1992, Amtrak produced a feasibility study, complete with full-color drawings of a new Penn Station. The station that appeared in the study would be a suitable companion to the finely restored Union Station in Washington and to the similarly restored Thirtieth Street Station in Philadelphia. Amtrak even built a model that lit up when it was plugged in, illuminating tiny people passing new shops and restaurants on their way to miniature trains on the tracks below. When the lights went on in the Penn Station model, in Amtrak's office in Union Station, Moynihan became an instant enthusiast.

A year later, Moynihan got Mayor David Dinkins to endorse the project. Moynihan quickly wrote a draft of an Op-Ed piece for the *Times*, to bear a joint byline with Dinkins. Moynihan titled it "Back to the Future: Old Pennsylvania Station Now," and he wrote, "Enter a time machine, turn back the clock, re-create Penn Station in the great Farley Post Office atop the same train tracks, athwart the same transportation systems, intercity and suburban rail, subway, bus, taxi, sidewalk of old. All anew! David Riesman once remarked that America is the land of the second chance. And, by God, here is one." On the steps of the Farley Building, on August 31st, Moynihan endorsed Dinkins for reëlection. Both pledged their support for a new Penn Station, but the *Times* rejected the Op-Ed article.

Two months later, just before a speech on health care by President Clinton, Moynihan raised the question of Penn Station with him. The next day, October 28th, which happened to be the thirtieth anniversary of the first day of the old Penn Station's demolition, Clinton campaigned for Dinkins at a rally in a union hall in Queens. After praising the Mayor, he spoke briefly in favor of the Penn Station project. The following week, Dinkins was defeated. A week later, Moynihan inquired at the White House about the future of Penn Station and was referred to an associate director in the Office of Management and Budget, Christopher Edley. In December, Edley held a meeting in his office of all the appropriate officials at all levels of government—local, state, and

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McKIM'S MONUMENTS

BY BRENDAN GILL

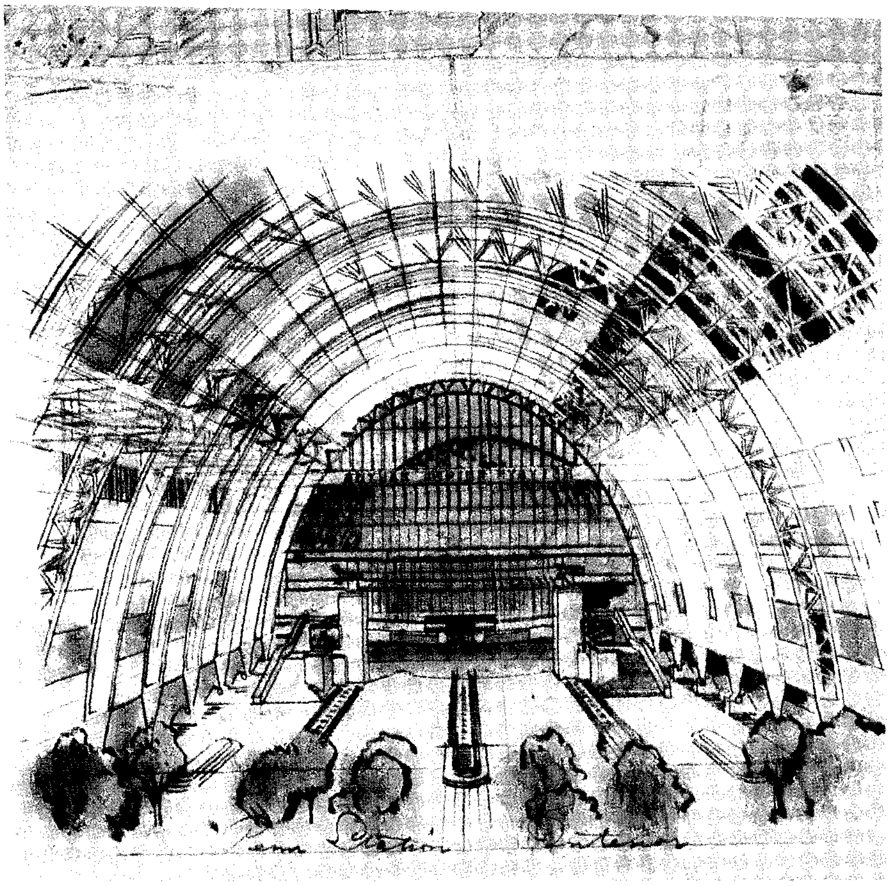
In the early years of this century, when railroads were the country's dominant form of transportation, the Pennsylvania Railroad began building a colossal new station on the tract of land embraced by Thirty-first and Thirty-third Streets and Seventh and Eighth Avenues. The practical purpose of the structure was to take advantage of the technology that made it possible for electricity to replace coal-fired steam in providing power for locomotives, and so eliminate the soot and ash that had traditionally turned the areas adjacent to railroad tracks into all but uninhabitable slums. Its psychological purpose was to serve as an outward and visible sign of the prosperity of the great corporation that commissioned it.

Theretofore, the Pennsy Line had ended in open yards on the Jersey shore, with ferries carrying railroad cars across the Hudson. It was a formidably expensive undertaking to bring the lines through a tunnel under the Hudson, and then to build at the tunnel's end a station on a scale that only the New York Central's Grand Central could rival. At the time, cost was by no means the primary concern. Pride required that the Pennsy produce a monument to itself in the heart of New York, and to design this monument it made an obvious choice: Charles Follen McKim, of the architectural firm of McKim, Mead & White, which was the most highly regarded architectural firm in the country.

In its classic grandeur, the station that McKim designed might well have been mistaken for a portion of the Forum in Imperial Rome. Scores of immense granite columns lined the perimeter of the site, out of the center of which rose a gigantic near-replica of the Baths of Caracalla, containing ticket counters and serving as the main waiting room of the station. At the west end of this waiting room were two smaller waiting rooms—one for women, the other for men—and a multi-vaulted steel-and-glass concourse. From the concourse, flights of stairs led down to an intricate maze of tracks—those of the Pennsy itself, those of the Long Island Rail Road (which the Pennsy controlled), and those of the newly constructed I.R.T. subway. So mazelike was this "city within a city" that the English novelist Arnold Bennett is reported to have said that "everything federal. In a letter to Moynihan about the preparations for this gathering, he wrote, "I think it would be very helpful if you or your staff would convene a preliminary meeting to set the tone and quote Herodotus." Both meetings were, from Moynihan's point of view, successful: when the President's budget was presented, on February 7th, a hundred million dollars had been set aside for a Pennsylvania Station Redevelopment Project. (The rest of the money would come from the state, the city, the Long Island Rail Road, and New Jersey Transit.)

The arrangements are not yet complete, but the chairman of the Senate Finance Committee is convinced that, together with Governor Cuomo and Mayor Giuliani, he will seal the deal. Then, in 1999, on the eve of the new century, he hopes to see Penn Station reborn. "If you don't understand this, then you don't understand patriotism," Moynihan said. "You don't know what the country is about." The thought inspired him to declaim a Whitmanesque rhapsody on Manhattan:

Revival!
Up from the Meadowlands!
Up from the Jersey swamps!
Risen! ♦



Artist's rendering of the proposed main concourse, which would partially transform the old Post Office Building into a new station.

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could be found there except the trains."

Penn Station was thrown down thirty years ago. The railroad itself had fallen upon hard times, and the huge tract of land that it occupied was plainly capable of being profitably redeveloped. A plan was proposed that would make room aboveground for a new Madison Square Garden and for office towers, with much of the actual railroad station being confined to a basement concourse. Penn Station had long been considered one of the most important buildings designed in the American neoclassical tradition, so its demolition might have been expected to create a considerable stir. Not so. The protests of a handful of architects and architectural historians aside, the building vanished without a peep; it was only after its mighty columns and noble carved eagles had been carted away that the public at large began to take the measure of what had been lost.

The destruction of Penn Station, in essence, led to the passage, in 1965, of the Landmarks Law. One of the beneficiaries of this law was the United States General Post Office, which had been designed by McKim, Mead & White as a companion building to Penn Station. Facing the station directly across Eighth Avenue, the post-office building runs between Thirty-first and Thirty-third Streets and all the way back to Ninth Avenue. Its façade consists of a colonnade of twenty enormous Corinthian columns, fifty-three feet high. On the entablature above the columns is carved the famous adaptation of a saying by Herodotus: "Neither snow nor rain nor heat nor gloom of night stays these couriers from the swift completion of their appointed rounds." The structure was officially designated a landmark in 1966.

The federal government has now constructed a new, high-tech mail-handling facility several blocks to the south, and much of the space in the old General Post Office has become available for other uses. The Amtrak system, long vexed by the difficulty of operating in a remnant of McKim's Penn Station, is eager to prove that the Post Office Building can be turned into an admirable substitute for his lost masterpiece. The architectural firm of Hellmuth, Obata & Kassabaum has come up with an ingenious design for remodelling it, which includes the insertion of a skylighted concourse a hundred and twenty feet high in what is now a light well. (The present Penn Station would continue to serve Long Island Rail Road and New Jersey Transit passengers.) To help find the money for the transformation, Amtrak and its associates turned, of course, to Senator Moynihan, universally acknowledged to be the member of Congress most learned in matters of architecture, most concerned with maintaining a high standard of design and construction for federal buildings, and most adept at securing funds in their behalf. ♦

THE CRITICS

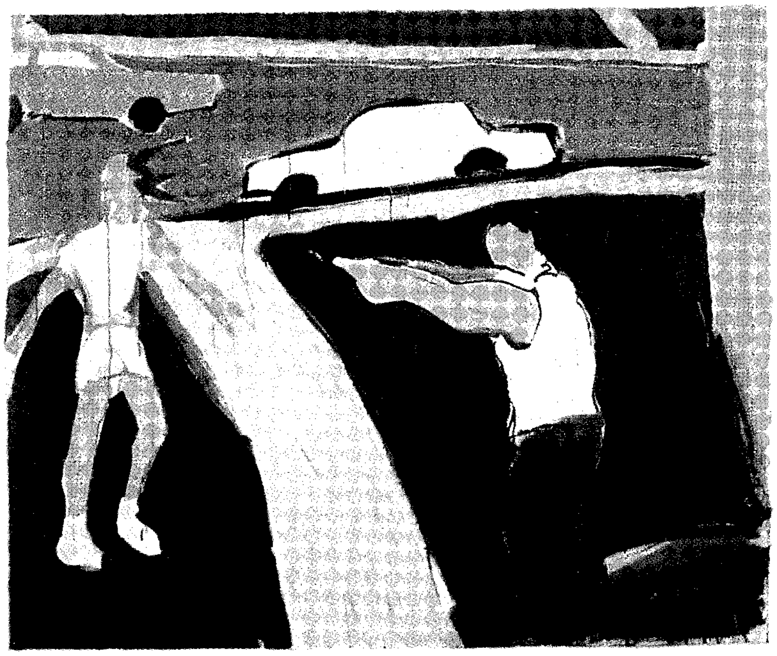
A CRITIC AT LARGE

THE WAR OF ALL AGAINST ALL

BY LOUIS MENAND

THERE are three subjects in American life on which the sun never seems to set: sex, violence, and money. Money exists in a sphere of its own; it is the green light at the end of the dock, the number that can never have too many zeros, a thing forever enthralling for its own sake. But the two other eternal verities are generally imagined in some sort of relation to each other. Several relations are theoretically possible. The first is antithetical: "If there were more sex, there would be less violence"; or (poster version), "Make Love, Not War." The second, which has made trouble for us in the past, takes the form "Violence is sexy": Cagney and Bogart, Mickey Spillane, a lot of Mailer, "Straw Dogs." Happiness is a warm gun. The distinctively American nature of this idea was the point of Godard's "Breathless," which shows that genuine sex appeal and hardboiled toughness look ridiculous together in a Frenchman.

Then, there is the combination we find ourselves currently committed to: "Sex is violence." How did we end up living in a world governed by an equation like this? The vocabulary we use to talk about sex and the vocabulary we use to talk about violence have somehow merged, with the weird result that both are a lot less glamorous than they used to be. We no longer think violence is sexy, which is a nice development, but we no longer think sex is particularly sexy, either. Our language is somehow preventing us from making distinctions we used to be able to make.



The key assumption in everyone's conception of violence in America today is that it is epidemic. The injury to Nancy Kerrigan's knee, the abduction and murder of Polly Klaas, the arrest of Snoop Doggy Dogg, the Bobbitt and Menendez trials, drive-by shootings, date rape, "Beavis and Butt-head," Colin Ferguson—they're all regarded as symptoms of the same pathology. And it's the pathology that fascinates us. The words we use to describe the isolated act of violence are words like "random" and "senseless"—language that makes judgment otiose. We do not condemn the lightning for striking. What carries the moral baggage is the language we use to describe the pathology: "abuse," "victimization," "commercialism," "the culture of despair," "the culture of violence." It has become almost unseemly to judge individuals, but about blaming abstractions we have never felt more confident.

This habit is not restricted to columnists and defense attorneys. After the trial of the men who had beaten Reginald Denny nearly to death during the riots in Los Angeles which followed the verdicts in the first Rodney King trial, Denny explained that he felt no ill will toward his attackers, and saw no point in punishing them further. He regarded them—as they claimed, in their defense, to regard themselves—as victims of mob psychology: they were involved in a riot, and were only doing what people in a riot do, which is to commit senseless and random acts of violence. Denny is, however, suing the City of Los Angeles.

The attempt to shift accountability from the person who stands before you to the impersonal forces whose puppet he is supposed to be does not always succeed, of course. The claim of Denny's attackers that they were victims of "riotism" was not widely accepted; Lorena Bobbitt's claim that she was driven to the kitchen knife by years of marital abuse was. Psychologically, though, the two situations were perhaps not very different: the rioters were caught up in a general frenzy, which must have made it extremely difficult for them to think clearly about the morality of what they were doing, and this is essentially what Mrs. Bobbitt's lawyers argued had happened to her.

We're depraved, in short, on account of we're deprived. The Menendez brothers say that they did gun down their parents, but that they were victims of sexual and emotional abuse—a claim that has so far stymied two juries. Lionel Dahmer, in his strange and sad book about his son Jeffrey, who murdered, dismembered, and cannibalized a series of men and boys, wonders whether exposure to images of violence in the media might have influenced his son's behavior—or drugs, or alcohol, or a disordered family life, or a mutant gene. On the *Times* Op-Ed page, Ishmael Reed responds to President Clinton's recent speech in Memphis about violence in black communities by blaming white people for supporting the drug trade. It has become impossible to keep track of the number of *Times* columnists who think that Tonya Harding should be regarded as a victim of the excessive attention we pay to sports. Louis Farrakhan blames the furor over the anti-Semitic remarks of one of his ministers, Khalid Abdul Muhammad, on (what else?) the Jewish media. The notion of *choice* does not appear to be enjoying a great deal of prestige these days.

THIS certainly looks like a culture-wide indulgence in excuse-mongering. But the mongers have a point, which is that locking up individual offenders seems to do nothing to reduce the amount of crime; the supply of offenders in our society is robustly self-renewing. If the causes of violence are systemic, then they need to be addressed systemically. And the most obvious proof that they *are* systemic is that if evil were randomly distributed—if every society could be expected to produce a fixed percentage of bad apples—the United States would not lead the industrialized countries of the world in murders, armed robberies, incarcerations, and rapes. We must be doing something wrong.

The problem with systemic explanations is not so much that they encourage the exoneration of individual defendants. They do; but Lorena Bobbitt is almost certainly not going to go out and cut again, if for no better reason than that, as Jay Leno pointed out, she's going to have a tough time getting a date. (There are, of course, better reasons.) The danger of systemic explanations is that they explain too much. If the system is what causes people to commit violent acts, why isn't everybody violent?

The answer we seem to be increasingly taken with is that everybody *is* violent. "Normal" behavior, in this view, is just a reined-in and socially sanctioned version of "criminal" behavior; to put the same idea another way, the criminal is only doing what the rest of us secretly desire to do. Nancy Kerrigan stalks Tonya Harding in her dreams. This is exactly the logic in which our idea of sex has become trapped—the notion that when you peer under the rock of puritan discretion and hypocrisy you see that all sexual behavior, from bottom patting to serial killing, falls along a continuum, and that sex is everywhere used to abuse, dominate, and oppress.

The reason, for example, that Antioch College's infamous sex code, designed to prevent date rape, has made such rich editorial fodder is that the code articulates precisely this conception of sexual behavior as a continuum, though in a sort of comic form. The rules, as everyone knows, require that permission be requested and granted for everything from thigh-squeezing onward, the idea being that hand clutching and ear nibbling, if uninvited, are assaultive—like rape, although, of course, much lower on the scale.

The telling thing about the public debate over the Antioch rules is how often the code is evaluated, even by people who dislike it, as an intended contribution to the erotic life. Language can be sexy, people who admire the rules insist. Forcing couples to talk spoils the drama of intimacy, people who oppose the rules complain. What almost nobody points out is that the rules aren't about sex at all. They weren't conceived out of a desire to make sex more enjoyable, or even out of a desire to make sex less enjoyable. They were conceived out of a fear of violence. The assumption that sexual

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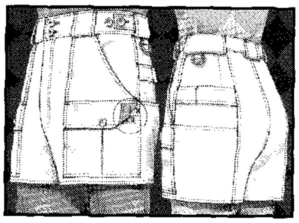

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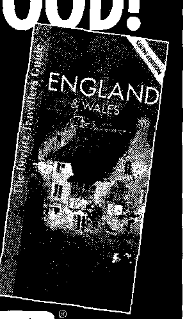

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relations among students at a progressive liberal-arts college should be thought of as per se fraught with the potential for violence is now taken for granted by just about everyone.

In self-consciously "radical" literature on sexual relations, this assumption is customarily introduced right at the start. The following sentences appear in a recent book by an Ivy League law professor (who is, as it happens, male and heterosexual): "Abuse plays a central rather than peripheral role in our mode of sexuality. Sexuality plays a central rather than peripheral role in male domination. 'Merely personal' phenomena like sex and dress are forms of political participation in the regime of patriarchy." Most people will be put off by this kind of language. But the same ideas are behind a hundred television talk and newsmagazine shows, where people discuss, graphically and endlessly, sexual abuse and domination—in terms of sexual tastes and practices, harassment and discrimination, dress and looks. The television drama is staged, of course; but it has been staged because the audience thinks that the issues genuinely deserve whatever probing Montel Williams and his colleagues can give them.

THE same assumption informs the discussion of violence: once the victimizer becomes a victim, too—once the background conditions get figured in—a continuum swims right into view. Reginald Denny and his attackers are, in their opinion, *all* victims of the riot-control policies of the City of Los Angeles. Nancy Kerrigan and Tonya Harding are both victims of the commercialization of sports. If young people commit violent acts with indifference, it has been said repeatedly, it's because we have all become too uncritical of violence by watching so much of it on television and at the movies.

People find it easy to accept this notion of "the culture of violence" because the deliberately dramatized contempt for other people that is the most terrifying feature of violent crime today is a sentiment not entirely unfamiliar to the law-abiding. It's not just the murders and the rapes, crimes that were increasing in frequency during the eighties; it's the bitter air of incivility that seems to have blown in with the nineties. The guy who shoulders you aside on your way into the bus or cuts you off on the freeway is not a criminal; his rudeness does not show up in the statistics. But it rankles more deeply than it ought to. You suddenly find yourself looking for a way to cut *him* off somewhere down the road—and you would, too, if you weren't worried that he might be carrying a gun. He probably isn't; he's probably just an amiable jerk who thinks it's cool to drive like a maniac. But we no longer make that assumption. For many Americans, systemic explanations for violence make sense because violence—or the threat of violence, or the impulse to violence—has come to feel like an experience that can't be escaped.

EVEN escapism isn't an escape. Television, movies, and pop music are the last places anyone would go to get *away* from violence, and this has led to a lot of talk about restricting the dissemination of violent images and offensive expressions. The F.C.C. wants to censor Howard Stern; Catharine MacKinnon ("Only Words") wants to censor pornography; Stanley Fish ("There's No Such Thing as Free Speech"), Cass Sunstein ("Democracy and the Problem of Free Speech"), and many other academics want to censor "hate speech." Ice T dropped the song "Cop Killer" from one of his albums; Disney censored its movie "The Program" after some young men died imitating one of its stunts; Simon & Schuster dropped its plans to publish Bret Easton Ellis's "American Psycho" after women's groups and others objected; "Beavis and Butt-head" was moved to a later time slot after a five-year-old was allegedly inspired to set fire to his house by watching the program. Senator Paul Simon, Representative Edward Markey, and Attorney General Janet Reno want television to regulate itself or face regulation by Congress. President Clinton wants Hollywood to regulate itself or—what? Stop feeling good about itself, I guess.

Regulation comes in many forms, ranging from loud public criticism to statutory requirements, and not all of them are necessarily objectionable to people who are worried about freedom of speech. The question is whether the deluge of graphic images and offensive talk is—as all the regulation arguments assume it is—responsible for real-world evils.

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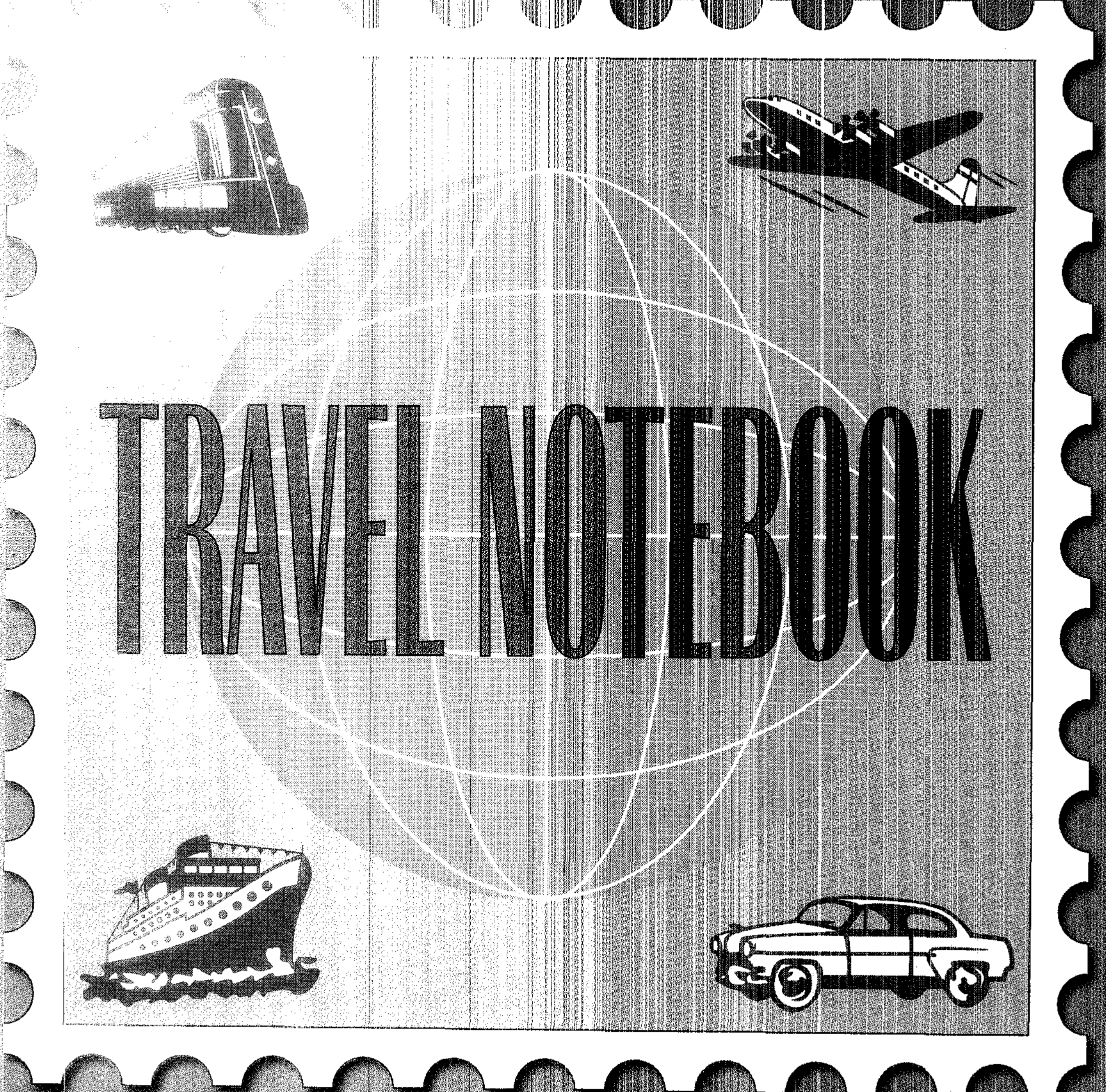

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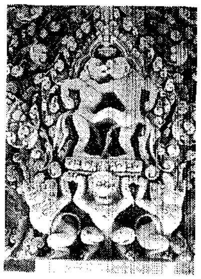

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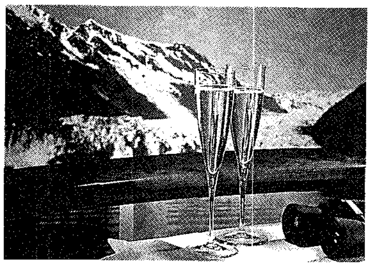

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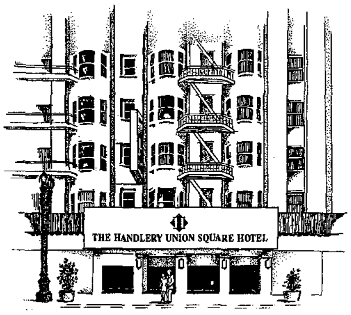
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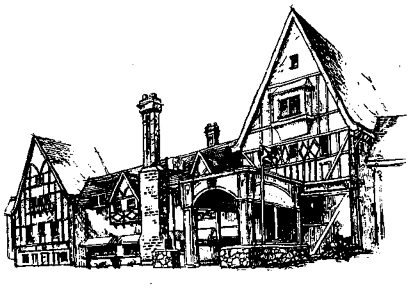

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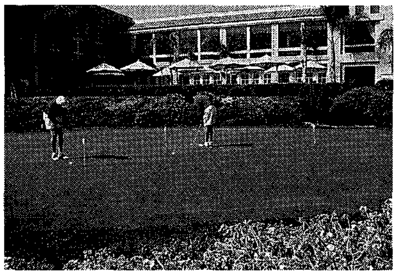

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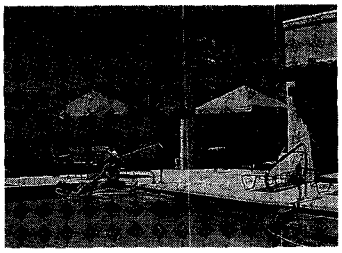

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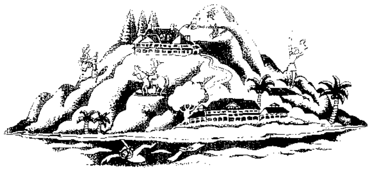

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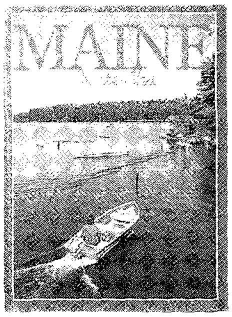

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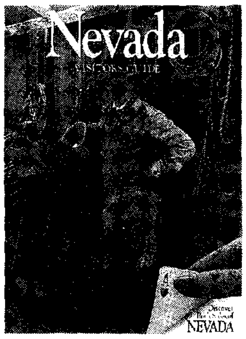

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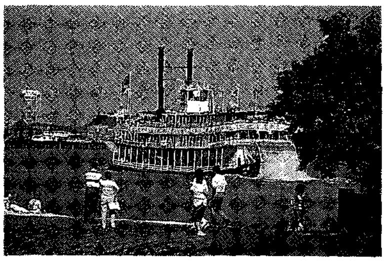

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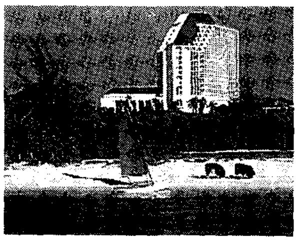

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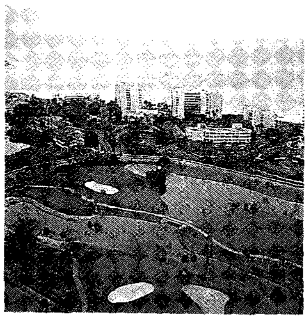

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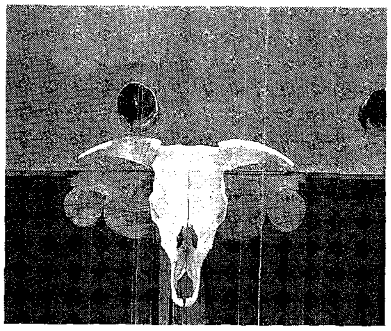

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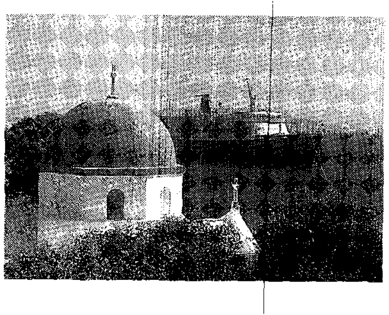

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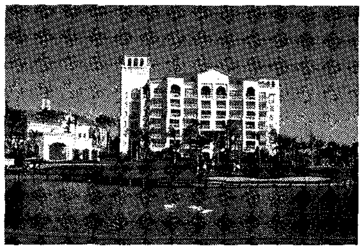

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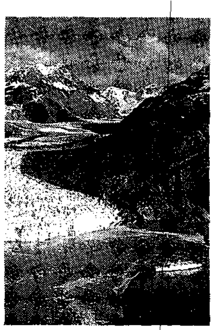

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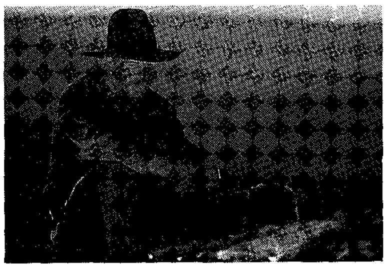

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TRAVEL NOTEBOOK

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fected for screaming at each other—as the linguist Deborah Tannen has recently been complaining—is to divide every discussion, "Crossfire"-style, into two, and only two, diametrically opposed positions, and to have the representatives of each side blast away at each other single-mindedly until interrupted by a commercial. In this atmosphere, one feels like the most high-minded sort of fool for venturing to suggest that the relation between what people see in art and entertainment and what they think and do is extremely complicated. But it is extremely complicated.

On the one hand, the position that people who oppose censorship tend to fall back on—that art and the media don't really affect behavior—is surely insupportable. If movies, television, music, novels, newspapers, and magazines don't have an effect on attitudes and on the moral life, what does? It's a pretty weak defense of the value of free expression to maintain that art's influence is marginal or "escapist," or that art simply and stupidly reflects "what's out there." One of the appealing things about "Pictures at an Execution," a recent book by Wendy Lesser on the fascination with images of murder, is that it is based unapologetically on the premise that the consumption of these images is not always disinterested and never morally inconsequential.

On the other hand, the idea that we could formulate a general rule that would enable us to suppress what is genuinely harmful in speech or art and leave everything else untouched—a kind of statutory magic bullet—is clearly hopeless. "The average American child watches . . . 100,000 acts of violence before finishing elementary school" is the sort of statistic (this one is from a research bulletin published by Congressional Quarterly, Inc.) that gets tossed around in every debate about television violence. It's an impressive-sounding figure; but it is, as only a single act of reflection tells you, essentially meaningless. A recent report on television violence from the University of Delaware, for instance, includes among the programs analyzed the twenty-fifth-anniversary show of "Laugh-In," on NBC. Asked about the appropriateness of "Laugh-In" for such a survey, Professor George Gerbner, at the University of Pennsylvania, whose own "Television Violence Index" is one of the most prominent of these surveys (but who does not release the names of the programs it analyzes), noted, "That particular episode of 'Laugh-In' was an extremely violent show."

What are we counting here? The number of times Ruth Buzzi hits Arte Johnson over the head with a pocketbook? The most violent movie of the past year was almost certainly "Schindler's List." Its violence is sadistic, seemingly random, virtually continuous, and terrifying. But no one would propose that "Schindler's List" makes people more violent, or more tolerant of violence. If it has any generalizable psychological effect, it's probably to make people who see it temporarily *less* violent.

"Bonnie and Clyde," to pull a chestnut from the embers of an earlier fire, glamorizes life outside the law; but it can't honestly be said to glamorize violence, which is portrayed as the extremely unpleasant downside of the criminal's way of earning a living. Still, I remember walking out of "Bonnie and Clyde," when I was fifteen or so, and feeling a thrilling charge of aggressiveness, which lasted, I think, all of the twenty minutes that it took to get back to the house. It was doubtless a good thing for the civic order on that day that I didn't cross paths with an obnoxious and undersized twelve-year-old. Does my reaction mean that "Bonnie and Clyde" is conducive to violence? How would we measure this? By sampling the adrenaline levels of fifteen-year-olds as they left the theatre? This stuff does not quantify.

The great weakness of regulation arguments, quantitative or not, is that they concentrate on the extremes, where the impact is usually least significant. This is a problem particularly for theories advocating the suppression of hate speech and pornography. Why should a noble text like the First Amendment be con-

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"Is there a history of recession in your family?"

• •

strued as protecting the mere dregs of speech, epithets like "nigger" or "cunt," Sunstein wants to know, when those terms can't be counted as "ideas," and when they are used—on campuses, for example—to intimidate black or female students?

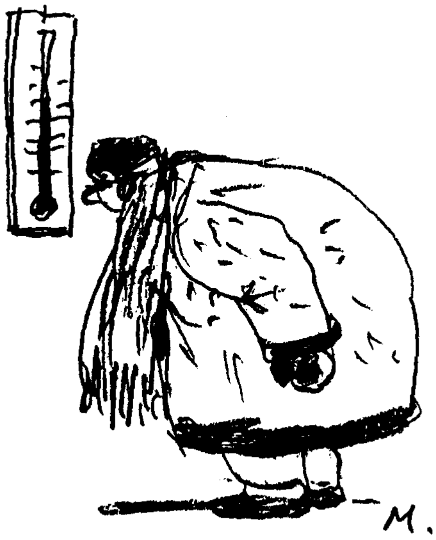
But, if we agree to stop protecting the dregs, then what do we do, as Henry Louis Gates, Jr., has asked, in *The New Republic*, about speech like the following? "LeVon, if you find yourself struggling in your classes here, you should realize it isn't your fault. It's simply that you're the beneficiary of a disruptive policy of affirmative action that places underqualified, underprepared and often undertalented black students in demanding educational environments like this one. . . . The truth is, you probably don't belong here, and your college experience will be a long downhill slide." Is this likely to be less or more intimidating than (Gates's contrasting example): "Out of my face, jungle bunny." What makes us think that an epithet yelled by a thug is more harmful than a carefully reasoned argument uttered by a bigot?

A similar difficulty troubles proposals to ban pornography on the ground that watching it is a cause of violence against women. The argument of MacKinnon's "Only Words" relies, in part, on the following syllogism: Women are abused in the making of pornographic movies, and men who watch pornographic movies are aroused by them to go out and abuse women; therefore, the movies themselves qualify as "acts" rather than "words," and should be deprived of First Amendment protection.

Without addressing the logical or empirical sufficiency of these premises (which seems fair, since MacKinnon scarcely addresses their sufficiency herself), and leaving aside the fact (unacknowledged by her) that hard-core, sexually explicit material is currently not guaranteed First Amendment protection, is it true that hard-core pornography shows more violence toward women than an R-rated movie about a sex killer? A picture—disembodied, as it were—of "a penis ramming into a vagina," which is MacKinnon's concise description of the content of hard-core pornography, is, after all, a relatively abstract image: it may represent rape, and it may represent consensual intercourse. And, contrary to what MacKinnon apparently believes, it is not automatically arousing to all men. On the other hand, a picture of a scantily clad young woman being chased through the woods by a madman wielding an axe is a sexualized image of violence pure and simple. Movies like "Friday the 13th" exploit fantasies of violence toward women a thousand times more explicitly than "The Devil in Miss Jones" does, and it is probably seen by a much wider and more impressionable range of people. Does it fail to be equally deserving of censorship simply because the madman keeps his pants on?

Parnassus has even lower slopes. Howard Stern's routine is to demean every person who is not Howard Stern, regardless of race, gender, or physical disability; but he seems particularly dedicated to demeaning women. The violence on Stern's show is verbal, but, psychologically, it is highly assaultive. For most people, the show is just a form of entertainment; but there is pretty clearly a type of listener who takes it far more seriously and feels encouraged by it to behave demeaningly toward women himself. In fact, "aesthetic distance" is probably easier to achieve while watching "The Devil in Miss Jones" or "Friday the 13th" than while listening to Howard Stern.

The degree of graphicness, or the number of violated taboos, and the degree of influence on attitudes and behavior, in other words, are not at all proportional. It is only a residual puritanism, or the crudest kind of representationalism, that makes us think otherwise. It isn't even the case that crazy killers are triggered by X-rated material. Charles Manson was inspired by a Beatles song. John Hinckley was obsessed with "Taxi Driver" (rated R), but he also carried a copy of "Romeo and Juliet" with him on his travels. Mark Chapman discovered a reason to assassinate John Lennon in the pages of "The Catcher in the Rye."



It's sometimes argued that the prevalence of violent images is especially disturbing because many of their most dedicated consumers are children, who can't be expected to draw a moral boundary between art and life in the way that most adults have learned to. Concern about children's culture has a long history. Forty years ago, the same worry centered on comic books, which were even made the subject of a congressional investigation. Fear of comic books may strike us, in the age of "Beavis and Butt-head," as a trifle alarmist. But the horror comics of the nineteen-fifties were actually more violent and sadistic than "Beavis and Butt-head"; a common theme, for example, was the murder and dismemberment of women, graphically depicted. Eleven-year-olds were the intended audience.

But the goal of horror comics (as Robert Warshow wrote at the time) was, by being as offensive and tasteless as possible, simply "to reduce all culture to indiscriminate anarchy." This is exactly the tendency of "Beavis and Butt-head"—and, for that matter, of Howard Stern. Everything is held up to ridicule and contempt, even the art form itself. It's *supposed* to be gross: it reflects and indulges the teen-ager's revenge on the canons of good taste and cultural correctness. This is the nihilistic art of "The Three Stooges," *Mad*, the Mothers of Invention, "The Rocky Horror Picture Show," "gangsta" rap. We must need it, for we've never been without it. Most people outgrow this sort of anticulture. But, to do so, they need an interesting adult culture to grow into. What's really wrong with American popular culture is not that there's so much that's trashy but that there's so little that's truly good. The most distressing thing about Howard Stern is the age of his audience: he's purveying the culture of adolescents to people who graduated from high school a long time ago.

SOME of the causes of criminal violence today can probably be addressed without recourse to broad cultural remedies. If we legalized drugs and outlawed guns, we would most likely cut the amount of inner-city black-on-black crime and juvenile crime, two areas in which the rate has been increasing dramatically. For violence is the police power of illegal enterprises: wise guys, as one of the characters in "GoodFellas" explains, can't call the cops. In the past, bootlegging, illegal gambling, racketeering, and organized prostitution were responsible for a fair percentage of the violent-crime statistics. Today, those activities are, relatively speaking, in remission, but they've been replaced by the drug business. And a certain percentage of the increase in homicides is almost surely attributable to more sophisticated weaponry: a kid with a switchblade in 1965 may have been no less anti-social than a kid with an Uzi today, but he was capable of a lot less mayhem. Legalizing drugs and banning guns are not popular policy ideas, of course, and there is no reason to think that if they were enacted "the culture of violence" would simply disappear. And this argues for finding a more systemic cultural remedy—a way to think differently about ourselves and our society.

There is one explanation for the degree of violence in American life which goes beyond policy and imagery, and which regards the resistance to content regulation, in the name of "freedom of expression," as just another symptom of the disease that's killing us. This is the view that Americans are obsessively devoted to the autonomy and the liberty of the individual, and are correspondingly indifferent to the needs—or even the idea—of the community.

Individualism, according to this view, is responsible for America's social atomism, for its divisiveness and competitiveness, for its glorification of self-interest, for its citizens' characteristic lack of consideration for others, and, ultimately, for its violence. Liberal societies like ours are based, it is said, on a conception of human life as a war of all against all, a war whose energies we can, through market economies and democratic institutions, harness but never fully suppress. The belief in individual "rights" as absolute, and desirable for their own sake, is one aspect of this liberal pathology. We can shake off our malaise only if we start thinking of ourselves as deriving our identities from communities, whose

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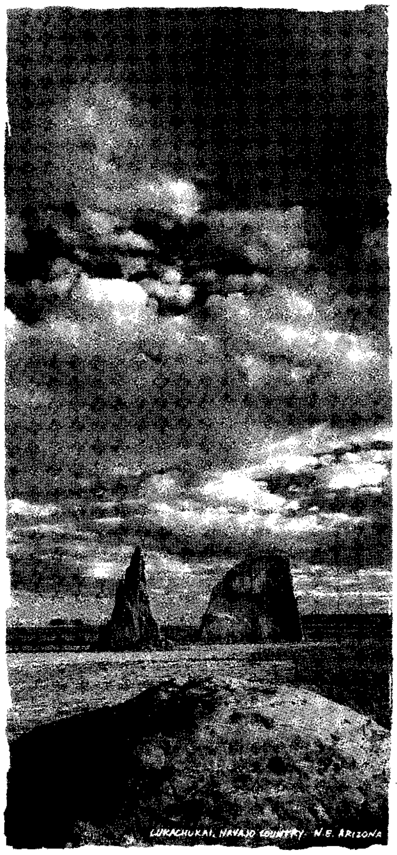

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good we hold paramount, even if this means sacrificing some of our own liberty as individuals.

It's true that America is a notoriously fluid place. People move around a lot; and, even when they don't, their attachment to their jobs, their neighborhoods, and, sometimes, their families is liable to be extremely provisional. The sources of personal identity in American life are not terribly rich, and there is a lot of spiritual sickness and drift. For a long time, the autonomous individual was the ideal that validated this deracinated national type. You weren't supposed to feel spiritually and psychologically dependent on some social grouping like a business or a town or a family; you were supposed to march to the tune of your own tiny, one-man band. The traditional American conception of violence was tied in to this idea of the righteous individual as a lone gunslinger. Violence and independence went together, since the law was just another prison house. Shane doesn't stick around to run for the Board of Selectmen.

A complaint frequently made by critics of individualism, such as Stanley Fish, is that liberal individualists fetishize the First Amendment: they use it as a trump card in every concrete political dispute, and thereby countenance real harm to the social body in the name of an abstract legal formulation. But is this really how individualists think about the First Amendment? One who is as impatient with liberal legalism as Fish, but draws a different conclusion, is Ice T, who, in his thoughtful new book, "The Ice Opinion: Who Gives a Fuck?," offers the following observation:

> Fuck the First Amendment. I have the right under *God* to say anything I want to say from my heart that comes out of my mouth. I do not need a law to say what I can or cannot say. I am a human being, put on this earth, and I can say any muthafuckin' thing I want.
>
> As soon as you make a law to tell you what you can say, the same law will tell you what you can't say, you see? Fuck the muthafuckin' First Amendment.

The brother has a point. It is one that Ronald Dworkin has attempted to capture in somewhat less in-your-face language. The First Amendment respects the autonomy not only of the person who wants to express himself, he writes, but of everyone who listens: "We retain our dignity, as individuals, only by insisting that no one—no official and no majority—has the right to withhold opinion from us on the ground that we are not fit to hear and consider it." Surely the first step in making people competent moral agents is to treat them as competent moral agents. The First Amendment is not—as Ice T correctly suggests—a mere legal abstraction, an escape clause for every bigot. It is an argument for equality, which is one of the moral bases of democracy.

THE deeper problem with the communitarian view is that it asks us to replace one abstraction, the autonomous individual, with an even greater abstraction, the group. What determines the group to which we belong? Nationality, region, race, gender, economic class, religion, generation, physique, profession, sexual kink, hair color? Each "group" we nominally belong to has interests that conflict with those of the other groups we belong to; and we often identify with the interests of groups that we don't "belong to" at all.

What's striking about the present climate of hostility is how little of it, in fact, reflects a glorification of the individual, and how much of it seems connected with group claims. It doesn't feel like a war of all against all. It feels like a war of group against group. The politics of group identity encourages people to identify their interest with a particular class, and thus against the interests of some other class; and the consequence is that it is universally taken for granted that black Americans have an interest against white Americans, that children have an interest against parents, that gays have an interest against straights, that women have an interest against men. And vice versa: the straight man who mutters "fag" as he walks past a gay man is not understood to be simply an intolerant and hostile individual; he is immediately taken as a representative of the regime of institutionalized homophobia. When the Tonya Harding–Nancy Kerrigan story first unfolded, it was explained as a conflict between socioeconomic classes; after it became clear that Kerrigan's background was not appreciably more comfortable than Harding's, the episode was recast as a conflict between toughness and elegance—as a case of "lookism." We cannot seem to explain anything without identifying the groups represented, and this forces us to take sides. When Louis Farrakhan, at one of his mass meetings recently, mentioned Colin Ferguson, the man charged with killing six commuters on a Long Island Rail Road train last December, the name was cheered.

It's not primarily a lack of respect for the community that accounts for the abusive and violent behavior we feel assailed by today. It's a lack of respect for individuals. Victims aren't communities, and neither are victimizers. There is no more effective way to dehumanize someone than to regard him or her as a member of some generalized "group." It is likely that John Wayne Bobbitt was able to treat his wife the way he did not because he felt impregnable in his individuality but because of some idea he had about "women" as a class of people. Colin Ferguson suffered from a psychotic version of the same mentality. Treating Lorena Bobbitt as a representative of "women" simply echoes the outlook that facilitated her abuse. She needs to be treated as her husband apparently could not treat her: as a person.

Sex and violence have become linked in our culture because we've started to understand every human encounter as a symbolic clash of group interests. There is some comfort in this abstract way of thinking, since it allows us to cover so much ground without getting tangled up in endless distinctions. But abstractions are acid to feelings: distinctions are just what Colin Ferguson didn't make as he backed his way down the car.

Violence can be talked about in the abstract, but violence, like sex, never occurs in the abstract. It is always a conjunction of singularities. We have fallen into the belief that morality can be ascribed to groups. But groups cannot be moral or immoral: "women" are not more or less moral than "men," and "the City of Los Angeles" is not more or less moral than "inner-city youth." Morality is an attribute only of persons. Individuals can suffer because of the group they are perceived to belong to, and they can benefit by identifying consciously with a group, but no one is a better person simply by virtue of belonging to a group. Groups are essentially imaginary. Souls are real, and they can be saved, or lost, only one at a time. ◆

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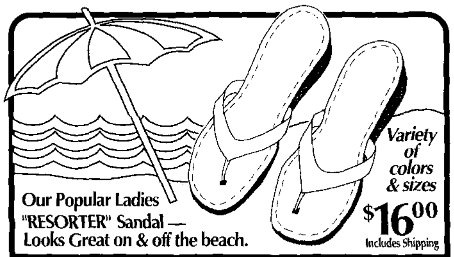
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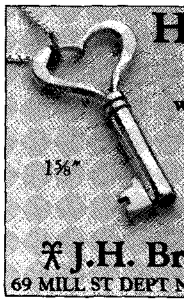
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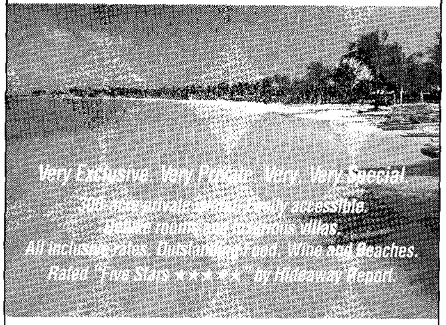

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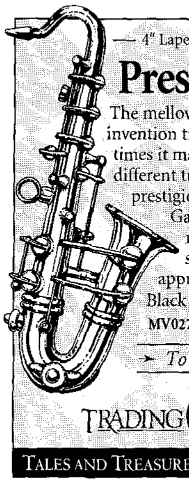

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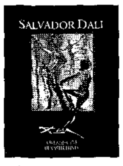

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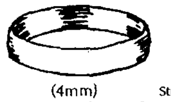

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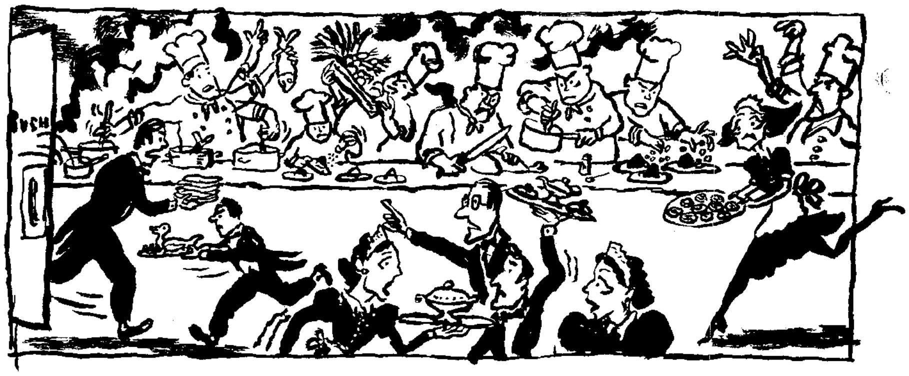

In the hallway of Arnold Wesker's North London house is a framed letter from George Bernard Shaw to the playwright who, at the time of the postmark—June 10, 1949—was an impoverished seventeen-year-old amateur actor from the East End, too poor to pay the fees for the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art. "Take care to make your lines heard," Shaw told Wesker, who had written for advice about how to play Marchbanks in "Candida." "Leave the rest to luck." And luck—both the luck of talent and the luck of changing times—was with Wesker, at least in the first decade of his long theatrical career. The welfare state, which transformed the landscape of English life after the war, also transformed its theatre. The world of work and of working-class culture became the focus of much contemporary drama. At the age of twenty-four, Wesker, who had by then turned playwright, caught this new wave, first with "The Kitchen" (written in 1957, produced in 1959), and then with a series of autobiographical plays that are now set texts on the English A-level syllabus: "Chicken Soup with Barley" (1958), "Roots" (1959), "I'm Talking About Jerusalem" (1960), and "Chips with Everything" (1962). Wesker gave opinionated voice to the struggles and dreams of a class of people who a decade earlier, if they inhabited the English stage at all, were there only as comic caricatures. Wesker is responsible for eight volumes of plays, two volumes of essays, and one famous theatre anecdote. "Shut up, Arnold," said the director John Dexter, who staged all of Wesker's famous early work, including "The Kitchen," "or I'll direct this play the way you wrote it." The Wesker-Dexter collaboration resulted in a string of influential productions throughout the sixties. But by the mid-seventies the times and Wesker's luck had changed. In 1971, the Royal Shakespeare Company's production of Wesker's "The Journalists" was scuppered when the actors refused to perform it. Then, five years later, Zero Mostel, the star of Wesker's "The Merchant," topped this spectacular collapse by dying after the play's first out-of-town preview. "If he'd stayed alive, I'd be a millionaire," Wesker says. There followed, in 1981, the dismal "Caritas," a tale of a barmy immured nun, at the National Theatre. Wesker found himself increasingly embattled and out of the critical discussion, but he has continued to pronounce himself to the English, even if they are not now so keen to hear what he has to say. (His earnings, according to him, come largely from foreign productions.) Stephen Daldry's current exciting revival of "The Kitchen," at London's Royal Court Theatre, where it was last staged in 1961, the year Daldry was born, pays proper honor to the innovations of the play and the playwright, and brilliantly illustrates the conundrum of English political theatre, which, while paying vehement lip service to the workers, rarely shows them at work.

"The Kitchen," which is Wesker's most frequently performed play (it ran for more than a thousand performances in Buenos Aires and for three years in Budapest and Warsaw, among other places), is the first modern English play to make a spectacle of people at work. Until the late fifties, English theatre was interested more in those eating the meal than in those making it. The reckless momentum of the kitchen captures the contemporary deliriums of speed, pleasure, and productivity. "It's a wonderful metaphor, isn't it?" Wesker says, and he's right. The momentum is also theatrically liberating: action stops rhetoric (especially Wesker's). The stage pictures restore the visual and the physical to theatre's game of show-and-tell, which has too often become merely a game of tell-and-tell. It's a sad fact of modern theatre that the prowess of the acrobat, the mime, and the juggler have been lost to the stage, and that the repertory of movement has been reduced largely to standing, sitting, and crossing to the liquor cabinet. Here the bustle and din of a working kitchen become a kind of three-ring circus where the chefs, cleaners, and waitresses are the performing workhorses and where movement is meaning. In the mayhem of this closed and captivating world, life is ruled not so much by behavior as by the clock and the compulsion of output—in the case of the Tivoli Restaurant, about two thousand meals a day. In "The Kitchen," the staff members mime their individual chores, and their actions at first seem at odds with the realistic environment but grow increasingly mesmerizing. Wesker conceived his inspired metaphor in 1956, while working in Paris as a chef at Restaurant Le Rallye, on the Boulevard des Capucines. "It is like working in a large room with an enormous blast of hot air buffeting you about," Wesker wrote in his diary that year. "Occasionally one has to scream. I do. I cry out aloud 'Shoot the bastards, don't serve them!,' in English. No one understands; so much noise hardly anyone hears. Five flames thrusting themselves with venom among the stones in iron ovens. Sometimes I feel they must explode. Force and fire cannot happen like that without something giving way." Onstage, Wesker re-creates the thrill and the punishment of the kitchen's mounting frenzy and lets them shape his play's structure and the final vision of disintegration.

"The Kitchen" offers a field day to ambitious directors. It launched Ariane Mnouchkine's career in France and Koichi Kimura's in Japan (this year, Kimura is mounting his fourth production of the play, and he has commissioned Wesker to write the book for a musical of it), and gave the playwright Jack Gelber a showcase for his directorial talents in his fine New York production with Rip Torn in 1966. Now Stephen Daldry has used the play as a vehicle for strutting his flamboyant stuff and solidifying his reputation as one of England's most exciting showmen. Daldry and his designer, Mark Thompson, have built a gorgeous set over the stalls of the Royal Court (eliminating almost a third of the theatre's three hundred and ninety-five seats), so the dress circle and a jerry-built grandstand on what is usually the upstage area of the proscenium stage now look down on the kitchen as if on a bull ring. It's an extraordinary sight. The oblong space, with its horseshoe of chrome counters, its *bains-marie*, its serving pots covered with dish towels, its neatly stacked piles of platters and plates, its black-and-white tiled floor, turns the theatre into an arena, emphasizing the essential nature of the play as contest.

"The Kitchen" is a kind of sporting event, with the staff racing against time and the demands of the waiters. From the first beat, when Daldry magnifies the rumble and groan of the ovens as they're ceremonially lit for the day, he misses no opportunity to be sensational. He uses the faces of his well-chosen actors like brushstrokes on a canvas of movement: Tony Rohr's lantern-jawed butcher, Max, a rolled cigarette dangling from his mouth; Annette Badland's beef-trust vegetable chef, Bertha, casting her hang-dog looks at the world through wire-rimmed glasses; Lorraine Ashbourne's Monique, a waitress whose bravado and beehive hairdo have captured the heart of the German boiled-fish cook, the manic flaxen-haired Peter (the compelling Christopher Fulford), the play's main character. For this production, which Wesker himself directed at the University of Wisconsin in 1990, he has written snatches of dialogue for the waitresses which give them a wash of personality and problems. Daldry, who had his cast tutored in the culinary arts, has them all moving to their own specific agendas of needs and actions, which he orchestrates in masterly fashion amid the belching ovens and the caterwauling waitresses. The cacophony of hurled lines and clattering plates builds to a hellish and wonderful

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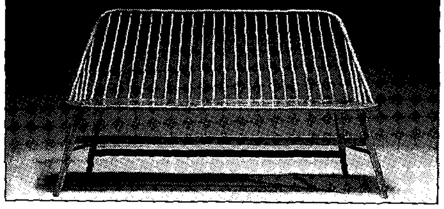

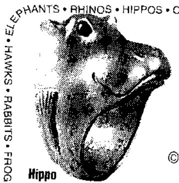
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first-act finale, with the lights going red in the frenzy of activity. One white light remains on the sweet-faced young newcomer—Kevin, the fried-fish cook (Dermot Kerrigan). "Jesus, is this a bloody madhouse!" he shouts. "Have you all gone barking-raving-bloody-mad?"

In his diaries Wesker was in no doubt. "I do not care about people who need to eat a meal out—there must be other ways," he wrote in his 1956 diary. "No one should work like this to produce anything—anything! Nothing in the world is more important than a man's humanity, his dignity." Fortunately for Wesker, his metaphor gets the better of his gift of socialist gab, and the play speaks mostly through the poetic spectacle of the kitchen's hubbub. The acrobatic accomplishments of the actors invest the staff's labor with a sense of prowess, and not polemics. The play only once allows Wesker to indulge his penchant for rabbinical finger-wagging, and it takes an actor as expert as Teddy Kempner, who plays Paul, the pastry chef, to make it palatable. At speed, there is no time for thought, let alone dreaming. While the staff members are between shifts, in the interlude that begins Act II, they get to talking about dreams. "When a man dreams, he grows big, better," says Peter, the cutup and bully, trying to get the others to reveal themselves. Peter, the immigrant to whom the restaurant is home and who is desperately possessive of the married Monique, won't risk self-disclosure himself. But the others are coaxed out of their solitude to confide a longing for something other than cash. Daldry and his actors successfully negotiate this sticky patch of the play by letting gestures speak louder than words: the brash red-headed egg cook, Michael (the excellent Thomas Craig), kicks a cardboard box around the stoves while imagining himself a goal-scoring winner against Arsenal; the sausage cook, Hans (Stefan Marling), plays his guitar and exits to his own imagined standing ovation; Monique casts a tender glance in Peter's direction after another of their squabbles over her leaving her husband. These miniature moments are crosscut in cinematic fashion with the detail of kitchen routine to build a sense of place and individual history.

The thought has occurred to Wesker that his quick-cut, pacy narrative juxtapositions have had their effect on more popular entertainment, and if that's true it may be because the play owes its style and its naïve documentary ambitiousness—which originally imagined thirty people on the stage—to Wesker's experience in film. It was written after Wesker's return to England from Paris and a stint as a would-be writer-director at the London School of Film Technique, in Brixton. But in the end it's the vision of steam, shouts, and sweating bodies which makes "The Kitchen" so meaningful and so memorable. As the second shift begins, Peter's life seems to be unravelling before us. "You serving yet, Peter? I want three turbot. Special for Marango," says the hoity-toity waitress Violet (superbly played by Sandra Voe), speaking of the Tivoli's pin-striped proprietor. What we know about Violet is only her comical grandiosity from her having worked "at the old Carlton Tower." That's enough of a plot point for Wesker to build on. As Peter starts to crack under the strain of his fraught love life and the pressure of work, Violet takes it upon herself to get her own orders. This small transgression is gigantic in the ceremony of kitchen work. "I'll serve you," Peter commands. "Me! Me! Is *my* kingdom here. This is the side where *I* live. This." Violet calls Peter a "bloody German bastard." Her insult is the last straw. Peter goes berserk and trashes the kitchen. It's a terrifying, demented moment. Plates are swept to the floor, a meat cleaver cuts through a gas fixture to stop the stoves, the staff dives for cover as Peter, chopper in hand, staggers into the dining room followed by the sound of crashing plates. When Peter returns, Daldry maximizes the standoff, with the cast cowering stage right and Peter, bleeding and exhausted, against the white-tiled walls. Peter doesn't explain himself, but the restaurant and its punishing pace are brought to a standstill. Marango (Ric Morgan) inspects the damage. "I give work, I pay well, yes," he says to those assembled. "They eat what they want, don't they? I don't know what more to give a man. He works, he eats, I give him money. This is life, isn't it?" He turns to Peter. "What is there more? What is there more? What is there more?" And on that bemused note, which raises issues that the play and the playwright can't begin to analyze, the staff members slowly, inevitably, wipe Peter's blood off the tiled walls and go back to the alienation that is their life.

In Wesker's original notes for the play, he wrote, "The times force people to take second best because it does not allow them to find the best. I come back to an old idea of mine: people are not responding, they are reacting." The sense of lost opportunity that fired the intellectual rebellions of the sixties is writ large in Britain in the nineties, only it translates as entropy. Daldry's revival is shrewdly chosen for the present hapless moment in British history, when the resignation at John Major's nineties has superseded the jubilation at the false boom of Thatcher's eighties. Britain is as sour as the Tivoli's soup. The hard rule of the kitchen seems to be the same as the implacable rule of the land: if it's on the table, eat it. ◆

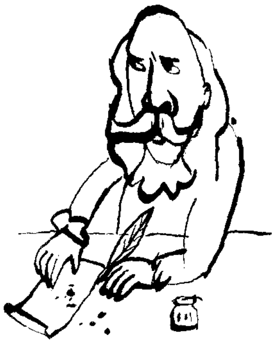
"You've got to admit—he looks good."

THE THEATRE

WEST SIDE STORY

BY NANCY FRANKLIN

DOWN on East Fourth Street, on the New York Theatre Workshop's wide stage, Peter Wexler has created a remarkable likeness of an Upper West Side apartment for "Unfinished Stories," Sybille Pearson's saga of middle-class family unhappiness. ("What's an apartment like this doing on the Lower East Side?" a man in front of me said as he took his seat.) Here, among the clutter, the books, the comfortable, unmatching furniture, and the views of the matronly surrounding buildings, Yves (Laurence Luckinbill), an actor in his fifties who has achieved mid-level success in "Man of La Mancha" but can't get beyond it, returns from his honeymoon in Paris with his new, younger (you had to ask?) wife to see his widowed father, Walter (Joseph Wiseman), and his ex-wife, Gaby (E. Katherine Kerr), a bustling librarian and activist, who takes care of Walter. This crusty patriarch, a Jewish doctor-intellectual who left Germany in 1933, has never been able to forgive himself for what he thinks was a lack of courage or to forgive his son for not being good enough to play the "great" roles. Rounding out the family is Yves and Gaby's twenty-five-year-old son, Daniel (Christopher Collet), who set out to be an actor and now drives a cab, and is weighed down by his mother's sixties idealism and by anger at his father for leaving the family. (Maybe everyone in New York who's pissed off at his family should drive a cab; then there would be enough cabs.)



The internal landscape of the play is as recognizable as the apartment, and what follows, over the course of two days, is a familiar spectacle of frayed strategies for self-protection as the family members act out classic mistakes in an attempt not to make *more* mistakes and to spare themselves further pain. They all mean well, but they're all so prickly that their words just drive them farther apart: this family is playing a game of disconnect the dots. Walter serves as the master puppeteer of the group. He stonewalls his son; he dotes on his ex-daughter-in-law and calls her "my soul" but ends up leaving her completely in the dark about a life-or-death decision he has made; and he uses his grandson as a pawn to get through to his son. Mr. Wiseman conveys both Walter's iron will and the maddening helplessness of old age, and creates a believable portrait of a man who, disappointed in himself, can only be disappointed in others. It's always fun to watch an actor play an actor, and Mr. Luckinbill gets the most out of his part. To defend himself against all comers, including himself, Yves has put on an armor of actorly bonhomie; in place of real conversation, he spouts lines from plays, and Mr. Luckinbill, properly delighted with himself, delivers them as if he expected a reward. Gaby is underwritten, perhaps deliberately; clearly, this is a woman with a past, but her function in the play seems to be to act as a go-between and referee. Her dilemma—how to get on with her life after her divorce—is resolved in the end, and you suspect that what happens to her after the play is over will be more interesting than anything that has happened to her during it.

Great care has been lavished on the production by its director, Gordon Davidson, the artistic director of the Mark Taper Forum, where "Unfinished Stories" was first performed, but, for all the fascination the play offers in anatomizing a family's pathology, and for all the accuracy of the verbal feints and parries (and of the set), it is something short of compelling. The very authenticity of the disconnectedness in "Unfinished Stories" gives the play a sort of clinical feel, as if it were holding the X-rays of four patients up to the light. ♦

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THE CURRENT CINEMA

THE SHAFT

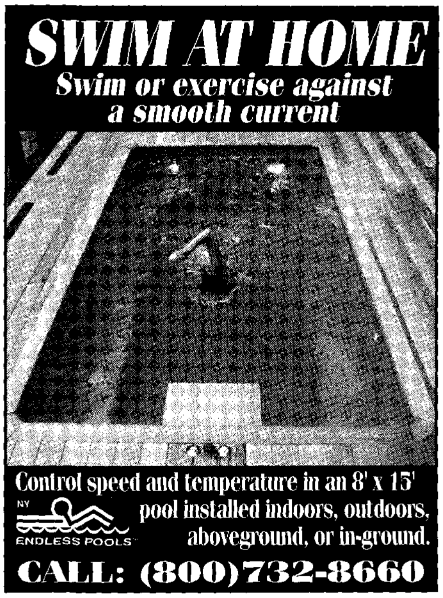
BY ANTHONY LANE

"GERMINAL" is adapted from the novel by Zola. It stars Gérard Depardieu as Maheu. It is directed by Claude Berri, the man who made "Jean de Florette." It was produced with help from the Ministries of Culture and Education. It runs two hours and forty minutes. And an awful lot of it is set in a coal mine. All in all, it needs a sticker on the side of every can: "Warning—Serious Stuff."

Besides Depardieu, the cast includes Miou-Miou and a performer called, simply, Renaud. It will be a relief to lovers of French cinema, still in mourning for the recently deceased Arletty, to learn that the Gallic tradition of actors with silly names is alive and well. Renaud plays Étienne Lantier, chucked out of every job he tries; we first encounter him as a lost soul ambling through the frosty dark of northern France. In the distance, there is a flare of lights and steam; coming closer, Étienne sees a pithead, some sort of chugging engine, and a bunch of people wandering around in hard hats. He approaches someone and asks, "Is this a mine?" Immediately, you realize what kind of movie "Germinal" is going to be: solid, staunch, tripping over subtlety in its rush to knock sense into our heads. It made me want to go up onscreen and ask one of the miners if I could borrow his hat. None of the characters escape this clunky ritual: faced with a shivering child, Maheu inquires "Are you cold, dear?" and his daughter Catherine (Judith Henry) confronts her slurring, staggering lover with the words "You've been drinking?" Obviously, Claude Berri's overriding ambition is to insure that we will, at all costs, get the point.

The point is plain, and inarguable: that in nineteenth-century France, as anywhere else, miners toiled under infernal conditions for woeful wages, and deserved better. The movie follows the fortunes, such as they are, of Maheu, his wife, Maheude (Miou-Miou), and their innumerable children. Add Chaval the thug, Souvarine the pitiless anarchist, Bonnemort the old hand with coal in his lungs, and the posh Hennebeau family up at the big house, and you have a fairly volatile mixture. Étienne is the catalyst; he hails from Zola's long dynasty of troubled spirits, those who must work out their pain by making trouble for others. He is the son of Gervaise, the drunken wretch of "L'Assommoir," brother to the murderous Jacques of "La Bête Humaine," and half brother to the whoring heroine of "Nana." You'd think that with a background like *that* he might as well go down the mine and stay there for the rest of his days, in what Zola calls "the night without stars"; but no, he turns his rage to good use, and rouses the rabble to action.

As social history, all this looks impeccable; as a campaign for justice, it is flushed with fine feelings; as drama, however, it's got problems. Call me a thrill junkie, but I find there's only so much excitement to be had from watching angry debates about the redistribution of timbering costs. The camera's first descent into the mine is suitably vertiginous, and there are compelling details of life underground, like the pit pony lowered upside down in a sling; but Berri is a tasteful director, who takes what he wants from the book and pretends not to notice its crunching emotional violence, Zola's willingness to wade through melodrama as he seeks to fulfill his vision of a beaten-down world. The haulage girls, setting off "waves of bestiality" among the miners as they bend to their task; a body bumping its skull agains a starving couple in a flooded pit the grandfather who stirs himsel from gluey despair just long enough to throttle a young virgin—here and elsewhere, skirting dangerously close to black comedy, Zola boils experienc and reduces it to its base elements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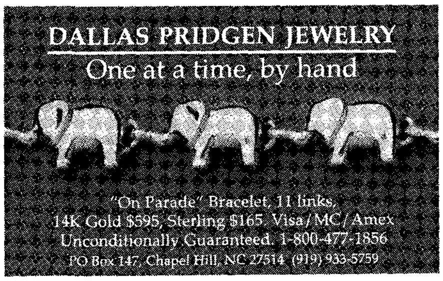
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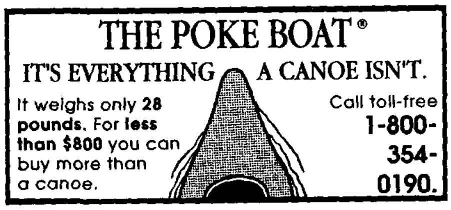
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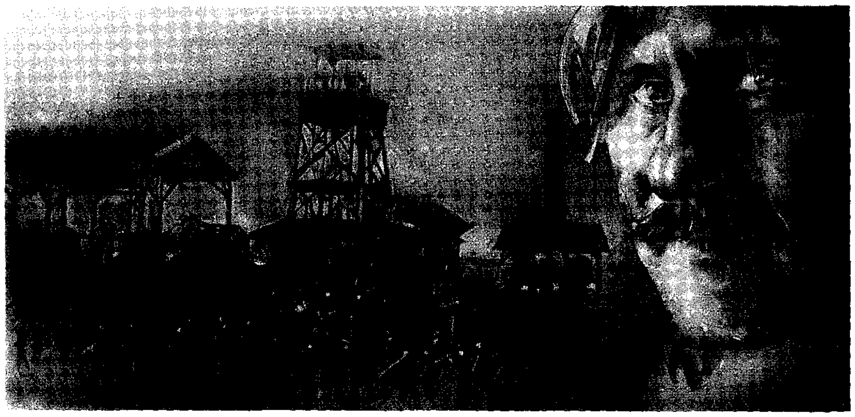
to blood and sex and food, sounding more like a prophet of D. H. Lawrence than like the responsible descendant of Balzac.

It isn't difficult to make a bad film from Zola; he can seldom resist telling us what to think, which makes him a far lesser artist than Flaubert but saves lazy minds a lot of bother. After he has compared the mine to a devouring beast not once but three times in the first chapter of "Germinal," you pretty well get the idea, and I suspect that Claude Berri was glad to have it. A better director looks for other virtues: for that rawness of sensation which lingers in the ear, and on the tongue, long after the novelist has expended his particular grievances. When Jean Renoir filmed "La Bête Humaine," set on the railways, he plunged into the moody possibilities of steam and grime, though perhaps he was too much of an optimist to share Zola's dour foreboding; that was left to Fritz Lang, who remade the movie in 1954, and produced one of his most immaculate tragedies—nothing was spelled out, but you felt the characters being shunted helplessly along the tracks toward their fate.


Digging down deep: Gérard Depardieu in "Germinal."

"Germinal" is more straightforward. A typical crowd scene consists of Étienne standing up and addressing the workers, who shout back "Hear, hear!" with that slightly over-orchestrated heartiness familiar from high-school productions. The handling of irony, likewise, is as delicate as a slag heap: while a rich lady sniffs at the poor, claiming that they are perfectly well fed, a roast pheasant is borne in triumphantly by the butler. Does Berri not understand that the political power of his movie is sapped, rather than enhanced, by such blatant illustration? This pushiness extends to the performances: it's hard to recognize Miou-Miou, usually so free and funny, in the determinedly downcast features of Maheude. And someone should have taken Jean-Roger Milo aside and had a quiet word about his portrayal of Chaval. I mean, I know the guy is supposed to be the villain, but does that have to involve quite such long leers and maniacal rolling of eyes?

And then, of course, there is the matter of Depardieu. It is impossible to make a dull film with him, though many have tried. He looms so large in modern French cinema that on those rare occasions when he fails to appear in a movie you sense a kind of Gérard-shaped hole where he ought to be. There's no point in objecting to this ubiquity; his is a prodigal talent, and the recklessness that drives him into dim pictures is simply the flip side of the energy that makes the good ones glow. He turns every project into an action movie: even when he's standing still, his hands seem to grab great blocks of air and shift them around, and his voice—not least that urgent, throaty croon which he has patented for softer moments—threatens to rearrange the furniture.

Among directors, the big mistake has been to try and squeeze this passion into a corner, to tell Depardieu what moral direction he should take; he himself, by contrast, functions on the Falstaffian principle that a man reveals his true nature—what may, if only at the last breath, be called his goodness—not in the narrow nicety of his intentions but in the fullness of his acts. As the happy, rutting boor of Bertrand Blier's "Going Places," Depardieu was more vibrant than in the earnest declamations of "Danton"; and his extraordinary work for Maurice Pialat in "Loulou" and "Police," cutting ethical corners with a grin, puts "Germinal" to shame. On the ground that he looks beefy in breeches, people tend to cast him in costume drama, but that once dependable genre is growing more worthy, and less swashbuckling, by the year. The Maheu who strains with rebellious fervor, bright eyes popping in his filthy face, is almost a cartoon; far more credible, and somehow more inspiring, is the Maheu who heaves his barrelly bulk into a tin tub and splashes around for the hell of it.

But not even a naked Depardieu can bully this film into life. "Germinal" was released in Paris during the GATT negotiations last year, and became something of a standard-bearer for French cinema, for everything worth preserving against the depredations of American culture, whatever *they* are. French directors could envisage themselves as the Maheu and the Étienne of the movie world, fighting the ruthless money men. As it happens, I think the money men should have been let loose on the picture, to tighten it up and trim it to two hours. The lasting impression is of something long and boring and good for you, like celery: exactly the kind of "quality" movie that Truffaut and Godard tried to explode thirty years ago, and hardly a product to trumpet now. Only once, without warning, does the film touch greatness. Hennebeau, the manager of the mining company, goes into his nephew's bedroom and sees a perfume bottle lying in the sheets. It belongs to Mme. Hennebeau. Outside, the striking miners proclaim their need for bread, to which he replies, "You think bread is enough?" It is a callous, self-interested remark, yet it opens up a chasm of feeling into a single soul, reaching deeper than anything else in the movie. "Germinal" lays bare a wounded society, and cries for change; but this is cinema, a damnable medium in which we are left cold by public pleas, and devastated by the momentary horror of a cuckolded fool. ♦

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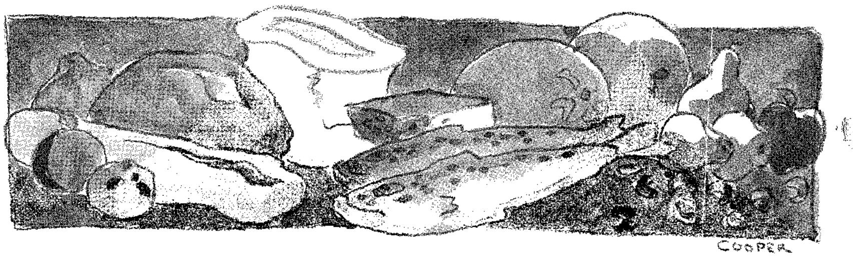
BOOKS

THE GOOD BOOK AS COOK BOOK

BY JOHN UPDIKE



Millroy the Magician
by Paul Theroux
(Random House; $24)

PAUL THEROUX'S new novel reverses the black mood of his last one, "Chicago Loop," with a brilliant display of imagistic legerdemain and Biblical cuisine; it is the story of a strikingly bald, luxuriously mustached modern Jesus, told by a skinny little Lolita from Cape Cod, who sucks her thumb even though she is fourteen going on fifteen. Jilly Farina is her name, and she catches the eye—the eyes, which change color like the lights in a discothèque—of Millroy the Magician at the Barnstable County Fair. Her father, Dada, was supposed to take her, but she finds him lying "black-out drunk" in his trailer, so she goes alone, and by that night is living in Millroy's tidy Airstream instead of keeping unhappy company with her abusive and dismal grandmother, Gaga. Jilly's subsequent adventures with Millroy have the polychrome brightness of an Anne Tyler novel, pursued with an ambitious metaphysical agenda and at rather excessive length. The novel is literally and strenuously wonderful, a showcase of Theroux's fluent, faintly sinister powers of vision and imagination. Millroy's magic pops out at the reader from the first pages:

> I had seen him once with Dada and not forgotten. He had invited a small girl from the audience and turned her into a glass of milk and drank her. . . . Using a pair of tongs, he fed himself fiery sponges and chomped on them, then made a torch and chewed on those flames. Smoke and fire flew out of his mouth and seemed to singe his mustache. . . . I could see that these were real flames he was eating, and I was near enough to feel the heat.

Eating is what Millroy is all about; he tells Jilly, "I want to eat you," and magically transports her from a wicker basket onstage into his trailer, in whose darkness, that first night, she feels "swallowed up by this stranger, Millroy."

It takes great tact on the writer's part, and considerable suspension of disbelief on the reader's, to repress the pedophiliac unsavoriness of this abduction. Nabokov's "Lolita" put its unsavoriness up front, costumed in Humbert Humbert's rollicking confessional prose and mitigated by the human flaws in his captive nymphet's innocence. Theroux, a more schematic writer, keeps insisting on Jilly's utter innocence, to the point where she often seems to be truly, as she says, "a blank":

> "I'm nothing," I had said.
> He had not denied it, which made me feel awful.
> "I'm a blank."
> "Yes." And gave me his thankful face again. "I wouldn't have you any other way."

Night after night, for a year and a half, we are meant to believe, the two share close quarters with no more intimacy than the magician's sudden outbursts of conversation and the outcries of his occasional nightmares. He invades Jilly's body in the form of the food he feeds her, and the sexual metaphor becomes obscene only late in the book, when he tries to force a "finger" of melon into her mouth, and she resists, so that "the fruit squashed like poor weak flesh as he probed with it. I resisted, and then I licked it a little."

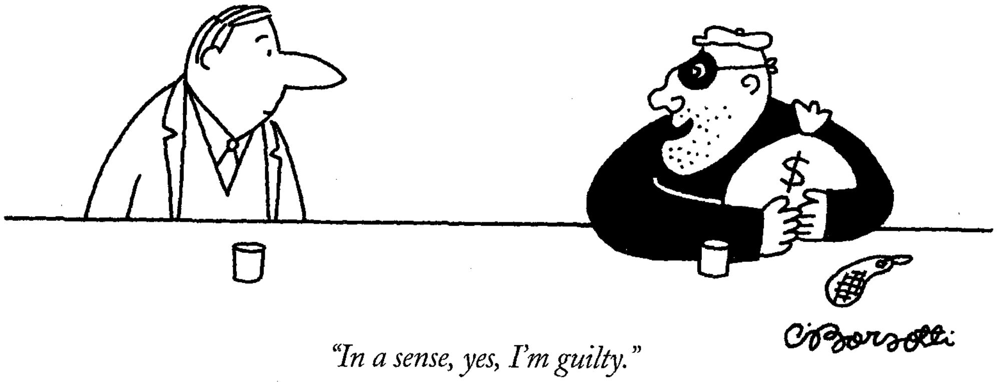
Millroy, who confesses, "I was once so fat I was imprisoned in the darkness of my body," has evolved a health diet on the basis of the Bible, which he and Theroux have ransacked for an amazing number of alimentary texts. Ezekiel 4:9 offers a bread recipe: "Take thou also unto thee wheat, and barley, and beans, and lentils, and millet, and fitches, and put them in one vessel, and make thee bread thereof." "Comfort me with apples" (Song of Solomon 2:5), properly interpreted, urges the consumption of apricots. Leviticus 7:23 enjoins "Eat no manner of fat" and, three verses further on, "Ye shall eat no manner of blood"—so much for deep-frying and steak tartare. The eleventh chapter of Leviticus, with its well-known list of dietary abominations, constitutes, according to Millroy, "an environmentalist's charter, and it's also a sort of anti-shopping list." A vegetarian who declines to eat anything with a face or a mother, Millroy is still "looking for guidance" on the many passages in Numbers devoted to the preparation of roast lamb, and translates the meat that Jesus consumes in Luke 11:37 as a mistranslation of a general word for "food." Nuts, grains, fruits, and fish with scales, he preaches, are Bible-approved fare. Numbers 11:5 remembers "the fish, which we did eat in Egypt freely, the cucumbers, and the melons," and Jesus after his Resurrection dines upon broiled fish and honeycomb. On fairly attenuated Biblical precedent, Millroy recommends eating flower bulbs ("Consider the lilies of the field—consider that they have edible rootstocks") and flowers—"marigolds, calendulas, borage, sunflowers, chive blossoms." He interprets Mark 1:6, wherein John the Baptist "did eat locusts and wild honey," to mean that John ate the seedpods of the honey locust—that is, carob—and ventures that "manna was probably a lichen, one of the several lecanoras." Not even condiments go unsacralized: Jesus mentions the spice cumin, and Numbers speaks of "bitter herbs." To drive home the spiritual importance of regular elimination, Millroy regularly cites Isaiah 16:11: "My bowels shall sound like a harp."

Disguising Jilly as a boy, called Alex or Sandy or Rusty, Millroy leaves Cape Cod and joins a Boston children's television show, which he soon dominates with his supernatural cookery. Fired for harping too much on bowels, he refashions a restaurant near Park Square into the Day One Diner, serving such salubrious and venerable items as "Jacob Pottage, Ezekiel Bread, Daniel Lentils, Nahum's Fig Bars, Bethel Barley Cakes." Then he goes back to television as an evangelist, lauding his Biblical diet in an increasingly successful Sunday-morning program. He enlists a number of children, whom he calls the Day One Sons and Daughters, and with their help founds restaurants in cities throughout the nation. He becomes a celebrity, hounded by admirers, enemies, and the press, to whom his constant companion Jilly, still skinny and neuter enough to pass for a boy, becomes a matter of intense curiosity. The Sons and Daughters resent her, and the Day One movement runs into the same pattern of public persecution and internal treachery that brought an end to Christ's earthly ministry.

The "Day One" section is much the longest of the book—too long, at more than two hundred pages. We read so often about the diner's menu of "Ezekiel bread, almonds, pistachios, figs, apricots, barley porridge, grapes and . . . mashed seed pods" that we begin to hunger for a Big Mac. Developments unfold with a treacly slowness, as the author seeks to extract suspense from a situation too fanciful to bear much examination. A pre-publication puff from V. S. Naipaul calls "Millroy the Magician" "one of the more bewitching of Mr. Theroux's many inventions," and the word "invention" catches out a chronic weakness—a sense we have of Theroux's novels as contraptions, as cleverly elaborated ideas rather than transmuted experiences. "My Secret History," a beautiful and rueful bildungsroman, did *not* feel like this; "Picture Palace" and "Chicago Loop," say, did. "The Mosquito Coast," concerning a Yankee inventor who builds a giant icemaking machine in the jungles of Honduras, shares with "Millroy" an adolescent narrator; a wonder-working, non-stop-talking hero, full of complaints about modern America; and a sad underlying theme of atrocious parenting. In its apocalyptic, Grand Guignol ending, Allie Fox, the inventor, turns into a talking head, a broken doll, as if we had been watching a marionette show.

The Day One movement is a contraption Theroux cannot stop fiddling with. Energetically he demonstrates his mastery of Biblical cuisine and of daytime television programming and of the speech patterns of urban black youths while his bald Romeo and immature Juliet (at fourteen, Alex / Jilly is about Juliet's age) languish in a kind of bemused torpidity: she keeps feeling blank, and he keeps spouting magic and recipes. Millroy is interesting less as himself than as a latter-day Christ. The rise and fall of the Day One movement is an ingenious, impudent, and not necessarily irreverent recasting of the New Testament, and in this form reflects considerable heat.

The parallels are legion. We see Millroy turning water into wine and back again in the tent at the Barnstable County Fair. He performs the miracle of the loaves and fishes several times during the novel. The Sons and Daughters are the disciples. The thronging opportunists with their plans to expand and commercialize the Day One message are the money changers in the temple; at one point, Millroy permits himself to lay angry hands upon a promoter, a man called Veazie. Jilly tells us, "After his anger drained away—it took almost until nighttime—Millroy seemed smaller but more complicated, and none of us knew what to say." Theroux's parodic account emphasizes those moments in the Gospels when Christ's uncertainties and fears can be glimpsed. Millroy has nightmares about a giant crab eating him, and Jilly in the dark hears him cry out "Don't, please"—a version of Jesus's plaintive "Let this cup pass from me." Awake, he confesses to her, "I have moments of doubt," and she observes, "His face was rumpled with shadow and his whole head had creases so deep I almost did not recognize him." The curious driftingness of Christ's ministry—the way that miracles were pulled from him reluctantly, out of a kind of depressive passivity—is enlarged and clarified in the mirroring tale of Millroy, whose name holds an echo of a millenary "king" and of a millstone's dreadful weight. Jesus said, "Touch me not"; Millroy gets "rattled when people touch him, especially women." He extolls Christ's frequent "look-no-hands" magic, done purely with words. (Millroy's real ambition, we are surprisingly informed late in the novel, was to be a writer.) Performing magic drains him physically. "Miracles and magic are the last resort," he says. "I only do it when I'm desperate." Jilly in her implausible innocence is some kind of safeguard against the underlying desperation of being a miracle worker. The Last Sup-



"In a sense, yes, I'm guilty."

per surreally becomes a shared meal in the Airstream trailer as it rocks and lurches amid Boston traffic: Millroy tears off one of his own fingers and slices it into neat little disks, saying, "This is not meat. It is Millroy." His crucifixion takes the form of his being handcuffed to his car's steering wheel, with his ankles manacled, too, by a Vermont policeman. But, as you might expect, Millroy escapes.

TOWARD the end of the elaborately constructed "Day One" section, which is liveliest in its allegory, Jilly flees back to Cape Cod, and regains there a spark of mundane reality, in revisiting her girlhood's impoverished loneliness:

> I pedaled past the old grassy airport to Gaga's. Nothing had changed since my last visit. . . . The house looked weatherbeaten and silent, the roof slightly crushed and sloping, the window shades pulled down, the tall orangy daylilies and some deep blue pansies at the corner of the porch brightening it, and clusters of heavy, mumbling bees clinging to the pink blossoms of the hollyhocks and making the stalks sway.

Such touches of landscape revive the long-dormant innermost story of "Millroy the Magician," the sentimental life of its two strangely matched main characters. When the pair abruptly flies from Massachusetts to Hawaii, Theroux, the best-travelled of contemporary novelists, conjures up this new place with the vividness of discovery, in Jilly's Huck Finn-like voice:

> It rained most nights, and in the daytime the road and the foliage steamed in the sunlight. Dolphins plopped and played in the sea below our front porch. We heard them gasp and take sucking breaths, we saw them toss themselves in the air. Our palm trees rattled, their lower fronds thumping like brooms against our walls, and sometimes a big splintery brown frond dropped onto the tin roof. The cockroaches flew with a papery flutter, and the cane spiders scuttled with no sound at all. Heavy mangoes dropped to the damp earth like a punch in the stomach.

"Magic is the power to see," Millroy says, and Jilly sees with the ominous ambivalence of her new mood: "In the distance where the water met the sky, a shadow surfaced from the ocean and sealed the horizon in a streak of darkness, the first stain of night." She has turned fifteen, and Millroy is putting a heavier pressure on her. He says, "I love you"; his hand on her is cold and clawlike; his superhuman feats frighten and repel her. A complicated interchange of vulnerabilities and powers takes place in this magic landscape of America's farthest reach. If the "Day One" section was too long, this last, "The Big Island," is too short, attempting to do too much, especially on its very last page, which leaps great gulfs and concludes on a note I took to echo the parting cry of Revelations: "Even so, come, Lord Jesus." Hawaii means more to Theroux, our impression is, than he has given himself space to tell us.

Nevertheless, a tenderness exists in this novel, and a jubilation, not hitherto conspicuous among this earnest and prolific author's qualities. His fiction has tended to cast a chill. There is a fastidiousness in Theroux that when expressed in the factual accounts of his travels, from "The Great Railway Bazaar" to "The Happy Isles of Oceania," has exposed him to charges of snobbery and scornfulness. Happily, this scornfulness—or sharp honest eye for grotesquerie and shabbiness—emanates in "Millroy the Magician" from a visionary protagonist who cannot be blamed for seeing almost all Americans as diseased and misshapen, poisoned as they are by cigarettes, meat, and chemicalized food. Toxins, toxins are what Millroy perceives on all sides, with their sad effects: "Hersh worries me most. That face. Lungs full of toxins. I'd love to hook him up and monitor his emissions, just to show him the printout. Hickle's body's too big for his suit; it's as though he's been sealed into it. You know his feet are swollen." Like Jesus strolling among the sinners, Millroy walks the restaurant districts of nocturnal Boston and peers into the windows of the pizza joints, sushi bars, and Cajun cafés, marvelling at the junk people put into their mouths, "fascinated by dabs of mustard in the corners of a mouth, or mayonnaise on lips, gravy on a chin; and a splat of ketchup on a forehead . . . people sucking on big swollen cups of Coke." These lost souls have "Fat Voices, Smoker's Face, Sitter's Hips, water retention, porky necks, belly sacks, swags and bags." Parker, the murderous, creepy hero of "Chicago Loop," was a food purist, too, but he crossed over into mire and was devoured; in contrast, Millroy and his effervescent jeremiads afford the author a conduit for satire, a zestfully distasteful panorama of a burgerized America full of self-created gargoyles, doughballs, and dyspeptics. Theroux, long a globe-trotter and dweller in England, has come back to America. There is nothing in the book funnier or more surprising than Millroy's outburst of indignation when he is invited to expand his operations overseas:

> "I have seen overseas. Overseas is smal and dirty. . . . Overseas people eat bad food gorge themselves on fat and die young Overseas people squat in hideous cold toilets or in the elements and hurry their bowels, their eyes popping. Overseas kitchen are black with soot. Overseas people hardl wash. They have flat feet, corrupt breath rotten flesh, no muscle tonus. . . . I hav seen their narrow streets and chipped sinks I will never go overseas again. I will neve have to. Overseas is overpriced, overwhelming, over there. It is riddled with opportunistic germs. Overseas is a health risl I have been there for you. God has place his hand upon America. This is the Promised Land."

He is not being, we gather from the fervor, entirely ironic. ◆

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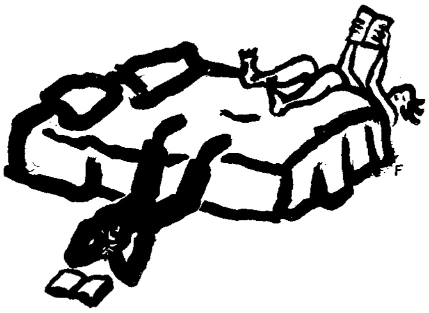

BOOKS BRIEFLY NOTED

FICTION

The Bingo Palace
by Louise Erdrich
(HarperCollins; $23)

A Chippewa grandmother rips the "Wanted" poster of her son off the post-office wall, pops a copy in the mail to Fargo, and displays the original—handsomely framed—in her apartment. Like her fellow-residents of the reservation's home for senior citizens, we immediately want to know more: "Soon we are trying to ravel back to the beginning, trying to put families into order and make sense of things." This is Erdrich's sustained and sustaining project—the retelling of Chippewa history by an ever-expanding number of Lamartines and Kashpaws and Morrisseys—and one feels a bit cheated when the latest chapter proves to be a hurry-up-and-wait installment. Lyman Lamartine, a suave tribal operator swimming in money and luck, wants to build a bingo palace on reservation burial grounds and marry the sexy and ambitious young mother of his child. Lipsha, his orphaned nephew, is smitten with the same woman but chronically inept—he can't even take his beloved out for Chinese food without getting himself arrested. Erdrich carefully stakes out territory ripe for spiritual, romantic, and political exploration, but then almost nothing conclusive occurs. The reader, like Lipsha himself, hangs around, watching for signs and getting a little crazy with aggravation. There is still much to relish here, and Erdrich is best when she seems to be circling wide around her ostensible subject: Lyman's catastrophic business trip to Reno, where he loses everything and pawns his father's ceremonial pipe; Shawnee Ray's sudden childhood memory, before a traditional dance competition, of her father rubbing her with butterfly wings; her son's forcible seizure by the tribal police from a sister's one-room house. But readers addicted to Erdrich's wild and luminous chronicles should follow this up by returning to her first novel, which has been expanded, and reissued by Holt (and by HarperCollins in paperback). Those familiar with her later work will find "Love Medicine" even more complex and pleasurable—if that is possible—than it was on first reading. (A chapter of "The Bingo Palace" appeared in this magazine.)

Marble Skin
by Slavenka Drakulić; translated from the French by Greg Mosse
(Norton; $20)

Slavenka Drakulić, a co-founder of the first feminist group in Yugoslavia, is well known for her collections of essays about daily life under Communism and during the Balkan wars. Her second novel, first published in 1987 in Yugoslavia, explores a tangled and erotic mother-daughter relationship, one that confronts what she has called "the last taboo; the sexual mother." The mother is a distant figure who isolates herself behind locked doors, obsessive cleanliness, and the impersonal churning of domesticity. The fourteen-year-old daughter, attempting to forge a closeness with her mother, sleeps with her stepfather. "The man's touch weaves bonds between us," she imagines telling her mother, but eventually she realizes that he is the obstacle between them instead of the bridge. Years later, the daughter, now a sculptor, chisels from marble her mother's body, her legs half spread and one hand in between. When the mother sees the provocative result, she tries to take her own life. Despite an often theatrical delivery, Drakulić dives into writing with the detailed exhaustiveness of Colette and the non-linear, psychological meandering of Duras. By leaving her characters unnamed, Drakulić may have intended the novel as a feminist parable, and although the ending is unconvincing, she powerfully illustrates the lessons daughters learn from their mothers about silence, forgetting, and, ultimately, forgiveness. ♦

SHOUTS AND MURMURS

ALL SHOOK UP

BY BOBBIE ANN MASON

SCREAM sightings have been popping up all over the place ever since the famous Munch painting was stolen from the National Art Museum in Norway. The Scream was first spotted at the Olympics, and then at a Starbucks in Santa Barbara. It was glimpsed on a frozen shoulder of I-95 just south of Waterville, Maine, trying to hitch a ride, and it turned up on the same morning in the crowd beside the batting cage in Sarasota where Michael Jordan was making his first swings of the day. It has been seen driving a big-rig, walking a Rottweiler, and lurking around mini-marts, laundromats, and factory outlets. But these are all bogus reports. I know where the Scream *really* is. It's right here in front of me, in my kitchen. How the universal totem of complaint materialized at my house in the Heartland is a good question.

I had already been screaming a lot over assorted recent tribulations (ruckus on the Richter scale; Tonya Harding's bodyguard; Oliver North's olive-drab hat flying into the ring; Lillehammer-like winter weather everywhere), and a friend who has one of those inflatable four-foot Screams tethered in her dining room sent me an eighteen-inch Scream, Jr., of my very own. My husband, Roger, blew it up and set it on a paddle of the ceiling fan. It looked terrified. He put it on the floor, where the cats gave it a good sniffing over, and the Scream looked as if it were holding its breath in the expectation of a fatal puncture. Then Roger placed the Scream in the arms of our life-size plush Koko the Gorilla: nothing doing. Everywhere he put it was worse than the last, from the Scream's timid-looking perspective.

Then something happened. Roger set the Scream in front of our Elvis. (More than one vanished icon has found a new place to dwell here, but I can't go into that.) Our Elvis, a sexy ceramic collectible, entertains on top of a cabinet between the sun space and the stairs. He's decked out in one of his caped Aztec-sun-god suits, which is missing a few sequins. There in the light, he really appears to be a sun god—or at least one of the sun god's buddies. I like to think of him as Orpheus, the original rockabilly who plucked the lyre in a band with Apollo, Hermes, and Big Boss Man Pan. They say Orpheus could charm rocks, but Elvis could charm the pants off a snake.

Now the King of Rock and Roll and the official spokesperson of angst stand face to face, their mouths hanging open. It is as if they were meeting down at the end of Lonely Street, one block over from Valhalla. Their confrontation is timeless, yet full of moment.

"Eeeeee," says the Scream.

It shakes Elvis up. What is this? The Scream looks about a hundred years old and is as bald as a monk. Bless my soul, what's wrong with me, Elvis wonders. He starts itching like a man on a fuzzy tree. He's acting white as a bug. His insides are shaking like a leaf on a tree.

"You ain't nothin' but a hound dog," Elvis cajoles, trying to shush the Scream. "Cryin' all the time." He croons, "Are you lonesome tonight?"

"EEEEEE," says the Scream.

"Hey, baby," Elvis says. "I ain't askin' much of you. No no no no no no no no. Don't be a stingy little mama. You 'bout to starve me half to death. Just a big-a big-a big-a hunk o' love will do."

The Scream is fixing to scream again, so Elvis tries a different tack. He says, "Bugsy turned to Shifty, and he said 'nix nix!' " Elvis's knees begin to roll; then his pelvis begins its customary swivel, his left leg working like a bit brace. "Everybody let's rock!" he cries.

Slowly, the Scream begins to undulate. Its lips are like a volcano when it's hot. It feels its temperature rising, higher and higher, burning through to its soul. Its brain is flaming. It doesn't know which way to go. It's burning burning, and nothing to cool it. It jus might turn to smoke. The flames are now licking its body. It feels like it's slipping away. It's hard to breathe. Its ches is a-heaving. Its burning love is lightin the morning skies. It's just a hunk-hunk-a burning love.

The Scream reaches for the scar around the King's neck.

"EEEEEEEE!" it says.

"I'm proud to say that you're my buttercup," Elvis gasps.

I am smiling. If rock and roll wi never die, can spring be far behind?

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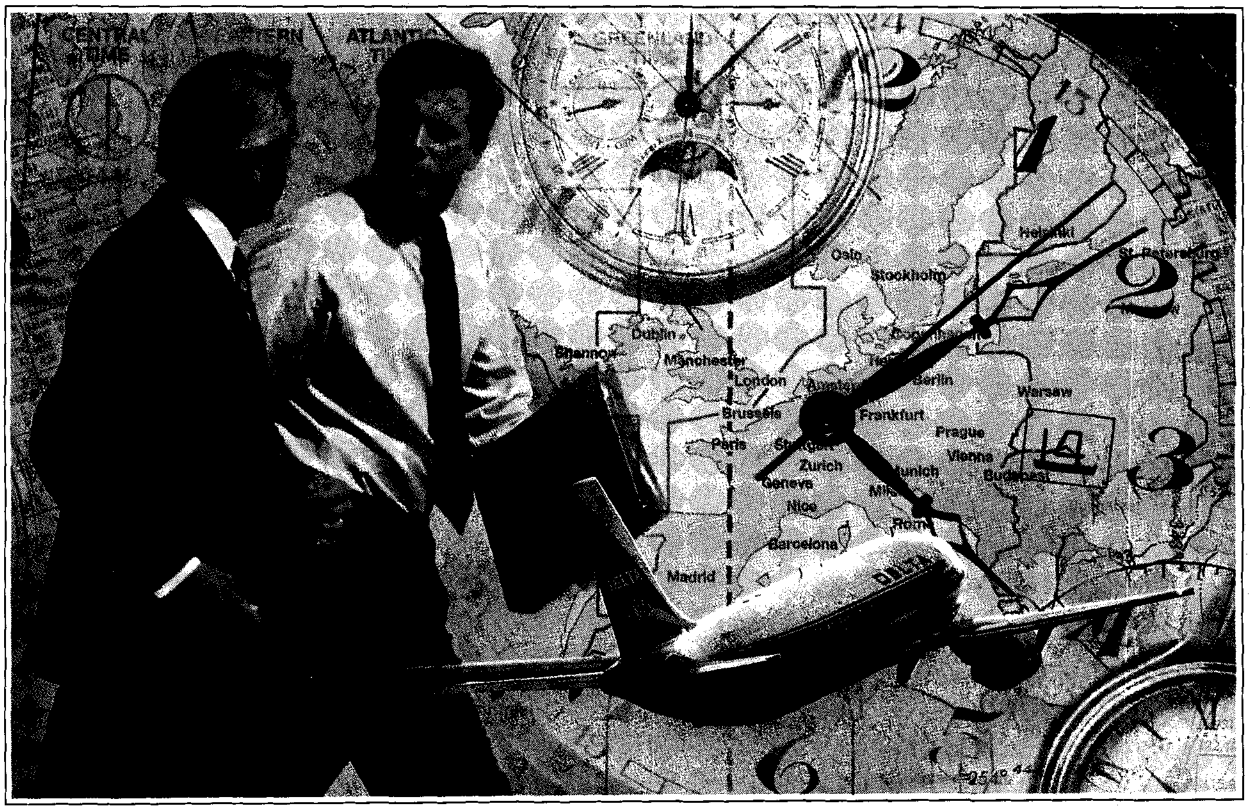

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